Viridian: The Green Guide
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Rating:
Teen And Up Audiences

Archive Warning:
Graphic Depictions Of Violence

Category:
Gen

Fandom:
僕のヒーローアカデミア | Boku no Hero Academia | My Hero Academia

Relationship:
Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Midoriya Izuku, Kaminari Denki & Midoriya Izuku, Bakugou Katsuki & Amplifier (My Hero Academia), Bakugo Katsuki/redemption, Kaminari Denki/Midoriya Izuku, Bakugou Katsuki & Shinsou Hitoshi, Bakugou Katsuki/Uraraka Ochako, (IMPLIED)

Character:
Midoriya Izuku, Midoriya Inko, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Tsukauchi Naomasa, Bakugou Katsuki, Amplifier (My Hero Academia), Takagi Ken | Rock Lock, Kaminari Denki, Queen Bee (My Hero Academia), Sensei | All For One, Shigaraki Tomura | Shimura Tenko, Original Characters, Shinsou Hitoshi, Todoroki Enji | Endeavor, Akaguro Chizome | Stain, Asui Tsuyu, Asui Beru, Asui Ganma, Asui Samidare, Asui Satsuki, Shirakumo Oboro, Dabi (My Hero Academia), Todoroki Shouto

Additional Tags:
Vigilante Midoriya Izuku, Suicidal Midoriya Izuku, Passive Suicidal Ideation, i promise it's not as dark as it sounds, Improvised weapons, I add tags and relationships as I write, Quirkless Midoriya Izuku, BAMF Midoriya Izuku, References to My Hero Academia: Vigilantes, trigger - Freeform, Parental Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Analyst Midoriya Izuku, Smart Midoriya Izuku, Hacker Midoriya Izuku, Nomu - Freeform, Villain Factory, Bakugou Katsuki Redemption, Self-Loathing, Bisexual Kaminari Denki, Kaminari Denki is a Flirt, My Hero Academia: Vigilantes Spoilers, Info Broker Katsuki Bakugo, Info Broker Dabi, Punt Endeavor into the Sun,

Angst, Cliffhangers, Slow Burn, Eventual Romance, but definitely not the main plot, Boku no Hero Academia | My Hero Academia Manga Spoilers, Throwing Chapter 306 Out The Window, Kaminari Denki Has One For All Quirk, Dead Todoroki Enji | Endeavor, Bees, flirting as a weapon, Murder, Human Experimentation, Secrets, Secret Identity

Language:
English

Series:
Part 3 of For The Want Of A Nail

Collections:
A Million and a Half Quirkless Izuku Midoriya Stories, Poor Izuku, Dad Vibes, Hin_, Read or Be Jared 19 Pick Your Poison, Jeru's Top Fav My Hero Academia fics, It's 2 a.m. and I'm gonna read it again (cuz once wasn't enough), Genius bnha fanfics, Deku Has A Brain, Storycatchers' pile of heroic hero stuff, Got 99 problems but these ain't one, theo's goodies, Vigilante Izuku because why the hell not, Fanfics I'd eat again at 3 am and already have, Fics which radiate chaos, my favorites, Catlady5001's Favorite Fanfics, Stories That Deserve More, Bnha fics that carved out a place in my brain, Bnha Bookclub Discord Recs, I've Read all of These at Least 3 Times (Most Likely at 3 am), 1Very_very_good_storys1, my personal faves, Pacing's bests, viri's hermit hole of good shit, Orbit's Fics To Reread, SakurAlpha's Fic Rec of Pure how did you create this you amazing bean, Read it and weep, bernie's bnha rec list, BNHA Treasure Box, In-Progress I Want To Read, I am simply too soft for dadzawa, God Tier BNHA Fics, ♡ >100k Fav Fics Bnha ♡, The Dadzawa is strong with this one, My Favorite My Hero Fics, FreakingAmazingFics, ✧Wan Shi Tong's Library✧, Unpleasant's MHA Recommendations, fantastic_fics, call 911 for I have died at the sheer perfection that are these fics, The best of mha on ao3, nonsense station's discord recs!, The Unitary, authors and fics that deserve all the kudos, Creative Chaos Discord Recs, ☆ Little Red's BNHA Library ☆, bnha dekuism, MhaBestEverWorks, Once Again Midoriya Izuku Is Catnip To Trouble, Vigilante And Probably Traumatized Midoriya Izuku, I've given my heart and soul for this fic, ☆My Hero Stories Worth Your Time☆, Shady BNHA Faves (Including Crossovers), These are Bundles of Emotions (and I Love them af), Fics that soothe my soul at 4am, Fav MHA long fic recs, E, Fics I've Recommended To Others, MHA Fanfics That Are Better Than Sleep, Badass Quirkless Midoriya Izuku, NotSoSmallGhostBoys Recommended Fics, Ace's Favorite FIcs, ReadAfterFinished_01, Adorable must read <3,

thiccboimork's reading list, Extremely Specific Stories with Chaotic Vibes, Pthaloteal, My Escapism List, My Emotional Support Fics (MyHeroAcademia), bnha fics that give me a ton of serotonin, Road to Nowhere Discord Recs, WHAT KEEPS ME UP AT THREE AM, FreakingAmazingFavorites, complete works BNHA (Izuku' centric), The Gift of Caeculus, I don't know what to name this collection, Completed stories I've read, Subscribed books I've finished, Stories that bring me back, Finished Fics (bnha), Really Ready to Reread, Suggested Good Reads, Dumb Bullshit to satiate my Escapism, Best Stories, top tier MHA Fics, BnhaHits1, Amazing Reads and Inspiration for BNHA, mha fanfic that waters my crops, The Fics You Read When You Want To Revisit Your Favorites, Looose Goose My Hero Fics, my skin is clear my crops are flourishing my grades are up and its because of these fics, my finished reads, Favs mesmo, cool fics, Академия. Любимые, My Favorite Works, Finished_best, My Favourite Bnha stories to read, plz plz plz read these masterpieces so we can rant and be friends, Behold the Sacred Texts, Awesomeness, Quirkless Deku, Top bnha fics ✧, Best stories for sleepless nights, Brilliant Bnha Fics, shitting and crying but in a good way, Would read again, Excellent Completed Gen & Platonic Fiction, Days' best bnha finds ☁, Vivian's Collection of Finished Works, A Picky Vest's Favorites, Dadzawa, Quirkless, Vigilante, MHAfavorites, Mirage664's Read and Loved, Fics I've Read That Are Longer Than Pride and Predjudice, 99NicelyFinishedFics, Mijwan's Favourites, ※BestBNHAfics※, Banco Fic, The Pearls, 10/10 Recommendations, my hero academia: a medley, Going Plus Ultra, BaNHAmmer, BNHA Fics *chef's kiss* 💯 💯 💯, Many Condensed to One, Wolfis MyHeroAcademia Library, craftyreader_favs, .˚.•.˚.↫My Bebu multiverse♡♡↬.*•.˚⋆., BNHA Leer mas tarde, fics i can and will stay up to 3am to re-read, IZUKU MIDORIYA AND THE MAGIC OF REALIZING HOW F*CKED UP YOUR SOCIETY IS, ✧Chris's Best Izuku Fics✧, Good Fanfics, Bec's Izuku Fics 🧢, bnha faves that keep me going, Long_fics, The "OMG I Can't Believe This" Collection, Best of the Best, Fics recommended by lunakaiii on tik tok, Finished favourites, Quirkless Izuku and Consequences and Adult Bashing and Parental Pros, IzuDenki Stories, Worth It BNHA Fanfics - Completed, Autiser's Favorites, Leannic Recs, Best BNHA Fics, The SMARTEST MF: Izuku Midoriya, Fanfic_Recs_MHA, dawn goes down to day, Writeass's favorite fics, Like A Favorite Sweater, BnHA Golden Collection, BNHA Fics that cured my cancer, Bnha fics that give me a reason to live™ <3, I will re read it again insted of studying for sure, Quirkless!Deku Fics, Bnha fanfic's that give me life, masterpieces i'll never tire of rereading, quetegustandebnh, My Favourite BNHA Longfics, Stuff ForestRGrey's Read, From the Vault,

I will cry about these (bnha), MHA_fanfics_because_idk, hixpatch's all time favorites, Flashfreeze Recs, International Fanworks Day 2022 - Classic Fic Recs, BEST BOI IZUKU_top BNHA works, Fucking amazing, BNHA fics that give me a will to live, .☄Thoth's Luxury Library☄., STO My Hero Academia - completed works, Fanfiction *I* Deem Worthy Of The Name, My Hero Academia, Fae Forest, The Cream of the Crop, Personal_Preferences, Tiktok_recommended, mages god tier reads, Quality Fics, Jaded Discord Server Recommendations, BHNA FICS FOR MY PACMAN BRAIN, Re-Re-Readables, longfics that butter my bread, grey_cosplay's tiktok MHA fic recs, A Pleasure To Read, Interesting stories by wonderful people 💙👧, flofli's collection of read mha fics <3, Nicee, ibisfavs, good fics that I keep reading, 📚 Wyrm's Fic Hoard 🐲, Adore Able's Server MHA Vigilante!Izuku Collection, Goodsoup1543, 📚 Fanfic Forum Discord Recs, The Collossally Curious Collection of Carefully Curated Stories, Niks, Best Izuku Fics, my comfort fics, bumblebee's fav BNHA fics! :-D, Everything so far, ✧BNHA FICS I LOVE✧, Alicia's idea of good fics, Dadzawa gems, blessed with this writing, someone is adopted, fics better than a lot of published novels, Vigilante!AU, Ones I would read again, Izuku don't need no quirk, (mostly) just some funky lil Izu fics, THE 🎵 UBIQ □ ☠ THE 🎭 UNIQUE 💮, binge reading at 3am, Great MHA, 100% all natural orange juice, Eatbook's Cherished and wanting more All Fandoms, dark blue sagas, Finished Fics, Hand-picked by a picky-person, BNHA Karl Kolumna aprooved, mha fics with cum worthy plots, I need þerapy but instead I'll read comfort fanfics, □Lux's fav fics□, Fics that cause emotional fucking damage, The Good Shit™, CataRaen's Favorite Library, Holy shit i love these (too good for just bookmarks), 👧 A Reading List Made By A Total Ass (with good taste) mostly Mha probably... I know I have such a way with words □, bnha fics that i love a little too much, Flappy Hands Are Happy Hands, Traumatizing class 1-A and by extension Aizawa, vigilante favorites, Screw Horikoshi these fics are cannon ✧, Vallawares, Planning to read - bnha - what am I doing with my life, Best of Vigilante/Villain Izuku, stuff ive finished reading □😭🙈, FavBNHAfics, ♕, RJ's Faves, Long bnha fics def will reread, Tia's BNHA OGs and Good Reads, Dadzawa Soup for The Soul (TiaLee), Mellow's Five Star Fics, sleep deprivation hits hard kinda like nyquil-pm, oml these fics are bloody amazing, *smacks lips* good soup, Find Me Where The Wild Things Are, Kas's Godly Fics, My Hero Fanfics, Marmalade's MHA Mayhem ^_^, ✧Vigilante Collection✧, 💙My poor baby💙, The Forest, The Best Fics in Various Fandoms, my little problem hero, [finished] bnha ɐ(□ ˚ ～ ˚ □)ɔ, Plus Ultra BNHA fics ✊, То что нравится, Leo's

Collection of Read MHA Shit, All kinds: BNHA's Fics version, fics that hit the brain itch, Deku centric, Rebel Devil To Read, Reading, ☆*: .｡. o(≧▽≦)o .｡.:*☆, Finished golden ones, Why I'm up all night, SMALL COLLECTION OF ABSOLUTE PERFECTION | BNHA, All my favs, Finished, 2023_Fanfiction's_Rap-up__V.R, My Hero Academia Fanfictions., Favorites, finished works I'm in love with, My Personal BNHA Fics Recommendations, quirkless izuku (is going to kill god), BNHA fics I actually like, pleasepleasepleaseplease, atsumi's favourite fics, Beeps favorite bnha fics, MY HERO ACADEMIA (but like... also villains), Why...(˚口˚) ! (pages and pages of google docs links)□(˚◡˚)□, Vigilante Izuku, SIMP'S GREATEST OF ALL TIME, v3n0n4t's bookshelf, Selected Best Reads, All Mighty Hero Selections, ✧ number one problem child ✧

Stats:

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Viridian: The Green Guide

by Clouds (myheadinthecoudsnotcomingdown)

Summary

After his dream is finally crushed, Izuku isn't quite sure there's anything left for him to live for, but...he can't exactly kill himself either, not without hurting the people he cares the most about. So, when he realizes that the quirkless can't technically be vigilantes, it seems like the best of both worlds. He'll be able to save people even without being a hero and, if he happens to die while he's at it...well, like Kacchan said, maybe he'd be born with a quirk in the next life.

This fic has a discord.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Technicalities

Toshinori glanced down at the boy as rain fell down all around them. Yes, the boy definitely had a heroic spirit, but just being *near* the power of one of Toshinori's full-strength punches was enough to practically knock him out. If he were to have that power inside him...his body wouldn't be able to handle it, he'd break! Giving a weak body so much power would be irresponsible, no matter how strong his spirit was. Besides, Toshinori's power was running out, he needed a *strong* successor. The boy would be able to find other ways to help people.

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"You're just a quirkless failure that wouldn't even cut it as a rent-a-cop Deku!" Kacchan screamed. "You didn't help me! You did nothing! I don't owe you *anything*! You got that?"

Izuku nodded fearfully as Kacchan stalked off. He was right, Izuku really *hadn't* done anything except get in the way. But at least he'd tried. It had been...weirdly exhilarating, that one moment of risking his life for someone else before giving up on his dreams forever.

If you wanna be a hero so bad, take a swan dive off the roof and pray you'll be born with a quirk in the next life.

Izuku shook his head. No, Kacchan was just being mean, Izuku didn't actually want to *die*, right? That's not why he'd run in to stop that villain. The rush was just because he'd deluded himself into thinking he was helping Kacchan. And there were plenty of other ways to help people, just like All Might had said. He could become a policeman!

You wouldn't even cut it as a rent-a-cop .

No, it would probably be best to do some research when he got home. There had to be other people out there that realized they couldn't be heroes, right? Maybe he could do some digging online and find out what careers *they* went into?

He walked into the apartment and was immediately almost knocked off his feet as his mom ran to hug him, "Oh, Izuku, baby! I was so worried! What were you thinking?"

"I guess I wasn't." Izuku chuckled. "Sorry, Mom."

After finally convincing his crying mother that he was, in fact, alive and well, he took a shower and then sat down with his laptop to look into alternate careers. The question now was what to type into the search engine.

What to do when you can't be a hero.

The search algorithm must be designed to search for any word in the entered phrase because the top results were all interview clips from various pro-heroes giving the *anyone can be a hero* speech. *Lies.* Halfway down the page, however, Izuku finally saw a result that looked halfway-like what he was actually searching for.

He clicked on the link and it took him to a thread on one of the hero forums. A user a few years ago had asked, "I just took the exams for several different hero courses and didn't get in. Being a hero was all I ever wanted to do, so what should I do now that it isn't an option."

Well, Izuku hadn't quite gotten to the point of actually *taking* the UA entrance exam, but the rest applied pretty well. He scrolled through the various answers. A lot of them just offered condolences and told the asker to talk to the career counselor at their school. Izuku didn't think that'd help him much though, considering that when he'd met with his school counselor last year, the woman had told him to consider being a garbage man. Not that that wasn't a completely valid career, but he knew she only suggested it because he was quirkless.

Izuku wanted a job where he could actually *help* people. Hmmm, a few people suggested being a doctor, but Izuku didn't think he was smart enough for that. His classmates were always telling him that he was a stupid deku, after all. Policeman might be a good option, but then again, Kaachan was probably right. If he didn't have what it took to be a hero, why would he have what it took to be a cop? He was just about to close the browser and go to bed when a comment with a large thread caught his eye.

Well, if you didn't get into the hero course, you can always be a vigilante.

Most of the replies to that were exactly what Izuku suspected they'd be, basically bullying the commentator for suggesting something so obviously illegal. Izuku shouldn't even be thinking about this, he was in enough trouble for running into the situation earlier but...wait? Wasn't that vigilantism too? They probably let him off easily because he's a kid and it was obviously the first time he'd done something like that. But that thrill of almost dying to save someone else…

Izuku opened another tab. It wouldn't hurt to do some more research on vigilantes, right? The more he learned, the more he'd understand that this was a completely stupid idea that he absolutely *should not do* . It was obviously stupidly dangerous and had a very good chance of killing him!

Right?

There wasn't a whole lot of information on particular vigilantes, at least not as much as there was on the legal heroes. Heroism was often based on fame, but apparently most vigilantes didn't get very popular. But popularity wasn't very important to Izuku, he didn't really need to be popular to be happy. Fame was for people like Kacchan who deserved it.

Then, around midnight, Izuku read a research paper about a group a few years ago called the Nuruhata Vigilantes. It was by a college student who apparently hadn't gone on to do any more serious research, but it did give a decent overview of vigilantism in general and how illegal heroes were seen by the general population.

According to the Japanese government, Vigilantism is defined as using one's quirk in an unauthorized act of heroism. The vigilantes of Nuruhata definitely fit the bill, but do people see them as evil, like the government proclaims or as good….

Izuku read the first sentence a total of five times before looking up the actual law. At least according to the government, quirkless people couldn't technically be vigilantes...wait, he couldn't be a vigilante!

Izuku didn't end up getting any sleep that night, since by the time he'd finished reading all the various laws on self defense and quirk usage, the sun was already rising. He should still probably find some way to conceal his identity, since he didn't want to make his mother worry, but...well, there was no law preventing him from risking his life to help people.

First Day of the Rest of my Life

Chapter Summary

The next day at school, the first night on the streets.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

When Izuku arrived at school the next day, his classmates had already heard both about Kacchan's invitation to jump off a roof and Izuku's idiotic run-in with the sludge villain and they had apparently decided that the two must be related.

"The loser, there are easier ways to kill yourself…"

"He was just being an attention hog. Can you imagine wanting to die on live tv?"

Izuku ignored them. He didn't want to kill himself, that was stupid and would break his mother's heart. Not to mention that if he killed himself, Kacchan would get in trouble for suicide baiting him. There were a lot of reasons why the teachers didn't bother reporting Kacchan for his...more explosive tendencies, but one of them was that if Kacchan's treatment of him were discovered, he might not be able to go to UA and Izuku wouldn't be able to live with himself if he was the reason Kacchan didn't become a hero. Well, he wouldn't be living at all in that hypothetical situation, would he? Whatever, it was still the same concept.

If he were to die doing vigilante stuff, on the other hand…

Izuku shook his head. He really shouldn't be thinking about stuff like that, it wasn't normal. He sat down at his desk and sighed at the flower someone had put on it. Apparently, there had been some sort of unspoken barrier against telling Izuku to kill himself but now that Kacchan had blown that barrier up, the other students were more than happy to follow his lead.

Izuku glanced over toward Kacchan, who was very determinedly *not* looking at Izuku. No, Izuku should stop thinking everything was about him. Kacchan just thought that the view out the window was much more interesting to look at than a worthless Deku like him and he was right. Izuku grabbed the flower and went to throw it away amidst a

chorus of giggles and whispers from his classmates. He could handle this, it really wasn't that much worse than it had been and Izuku was used to insults and threats. Why should this new evolution be any different?

Izuku had been wrong. Suicide baiting *was* different than what he'd been through before. A few days ago, he definitely suspected that most people would be happy if he died, but now he *knew it.* Was living even worth it anymore? Maybe it *would* be easier...but Izuku still couldn't be responsible for getting Kacchan in trouble or making his mom feel guilty. He frowned as he started to walk home. Being quirkless sucked.

Maybe he should go out and do some vigilante stuff later? When he'd researched it last night, he'd originally planned on waiting a few months to go out so he could get in shape and maybe get some fight training, but after the day he'd just had...well, he wasn't going to go intentionally put himself in danger, he was just going out to get the lay of the land, right?

He took a detour to a nearby shopping center on the way home, since he didn't really have anything appropriate to wear for *technically legal* crime fighting. His mom would be so worried if he somehow got a cold because he didn't dress warmly enough before going out all night, so he couldn't just wear one of his t-shirts. The problem was that all his jackets and hoodies were hero merch, not that there was anything wrong with wearing hero merch, but there'd been another vigilante, the Crawler, who wore an All-Might hoodie. Izuku didn't want people thinking that he was the Crawler because what if that guy got in trouble for what he did? Besides, it wasn't very polite to steal someone else's signature look.

He ended up buying a dark green hoodie. It was thick enough that it would keep him warm and the dark color would be good to help him blend into the shadows. Black would probably be better, but the store was out of black and he was left to choose between green or navy, so he figured he may as well match his hair.

There was a costume store next door to the department store he'd bought the hoodie at, so he decided he'd walk around and see what he could find to hide his identity. After looking at probably way too many different kinds of masks, he groaned in frustration. The simplest option would be to choose a simple domino mask, but one good punch and it'd be flying off his face. Not to mention that it might slide

around and impair his field of vision, which wouldn't be safe *at all.* He was about to leave when he walked past a display of different goggles. That might be useful if someone tried to throw dirt in his eyes or something, right?

The only problem was that he'd be going out at night. The goggles would need to be tinted to hide his face, but then they'd darken his field of vision. Izuku frowned, then noticed a sticker on one of the brands.

Quirk enhanced, won't color your vision!

That would work.

Izuku tried on a pair and sure enough, even though he should be seeing everything in hot pink, the world looked completely normal. He shook his head a few times to see if they were secure. Alright, so the goggles weren't just going to fall off like a mask would. But did he really want them in pink?

He ended up getting the goggles in dark green to match the hoodie and his hair. It was much simpler to have everything match rather than try to worry about accent colors and everything. And it's not like Izuku actually cared about what his vigilante alter-ego looked like. He just wanted to help people. If he were going to be an actual hero, stuff like looks would be really important, but...he didn't think he even deserved to look like a hero. So, Izuku really didn't need his vigilante outfit to be anything special, he just needed it to be practical.

The guy at the checkout had a unicorn quirk, which Izuku thought was pretty cool. Did he just have the horn or were there other aspects of his quirk? Could he run faster than the average person? How did the horn affect…

"Hey kid, are you actually gonna buy that, or are you just gonna stand there?"

"O-oh, um, s-sorry." Izuku put the goggles down on the counter and the guy scanned them.

"Nice goggles, kid. You making a cosplay?"

"Umm…" Planning out his vigilante outfit was kinda like making a cosplay, right? "Y-yep!"

The cashier nodded, "Cool. That's where most of our sales come from,

you know? But, by the way, if you're going for Hawks, we do have yellow goggles in the same brand."

"Um, no thank you. It's, uh, for something else."

The guy shrugged, "Gotta admit, I don't know all the heroes, but good luck with your cosplay. Hope it turns out ok."

Izuku nodded, "T-thank you. Have a nice day."

When Izuku got home, he hid the bags in the back of his closet and got to work on his homework, which was deceptively easy as usual. He always got through it too quickly, so he had to go back and second guess all his answers because his classmates, even Kacchan, took twice as long and there's no way Izuku was smarter than *them.* So, yeah, doing his homework didn't make him any less stressed.

Mom called him for dinner right as he finally finished. She kept glancing at him between bites like she was trying to check if he was ok. He didn't know why she was so worried, he hadn't had any negative effects from the villain attack last night, and it wasn't likely he was going to be affected by it now. And Mom couldn't be worried about the bullying because she thought it was a thing of the past. When Izuku was nine, he'd realized that the only one he was hurting by reporting his classmates was himself because he'd get detention for *being a troublemaker*, so he'd told Mom that it'd stopped and had taken up first aid as a hobby. So if it wasn't the villain attack and it wasn't the bullying, what was she so worried about?

"You're quiet tonight, Izuku." Mom said finally. "Is everything ok?"

Oh, so she was worried because he wasn't talking, that made sense. But he couldn't tell her about the vigilante thing, she'd be so worried!

"Yeah, Mom, all good!" He smiled. "It was just a long day at school, so I'm pretty tired."

Mom frowned, "Those teachers aren't overworking you, are they?"

"No, they're just trying to get us ready for high school and you know how much work that takes."

"Oh, well that's a relief." Mom smiled. "So, have you given any more thought to what high school you want to go to? I know you've had your heart set on UA…"

Can you be a hero? Not without a quirk.

Izuku gave a strained smile, “I-i’m not really sure anymore. Don’t get me wrong, UA is a great school, it’s just…I’m not sure it’s realistic.”

Inko got a look on her face that was halfway between relief and pity, like she wasn’t sure how she was supposed to feel. Izuku could relate. He finished his food and stood to take his dishes to the sink, “Thank you for the food Mom, I think I’m going to go to bed early tonight.”

“Ok, baby.” Inko stood to give him a hug, “Just…know that I’ll support you, whatever you decide. Ok?”

Izuku smiled for real this time, “That means a lot, Mom. I love you.”

“I love you too, baby.”

Izuku woke up to his alarm at one a.m. and quickly silenced his phone. Mom was a deep sleeper, but that still didn’t mean he could be as loud as he wanted without waking her up. He used the light from his phone and rifled through his closet until he found the hoodie and mask he’d just bought, then quickly pulled on an old pair of black jeans that had gotten ripped when Kacchan pushed him down the stairs last month and a black long-sleeved shirt. He put on the hoodie, but held the goggles in his hand for a long moment before finally just stuffing them in the hoodie pocket.

Even though he was technically going out as a vigilante, he wasn’t actually planning on stopping any crimes tonight. Sure, Izuku’s neighborhood wasn’t the *best*, but there were always heroes patrolling during the day, so there shouldn’t be too much crime at night either, right? Even if there was, Izuku didn’t actually *have* to get involved. He just wanted to go out and figure out what the streets were like at night. They were bound to look different than they did during the day and if Izuku was actually planning on being a vigilante long term, it’d be best if he didn’t get lost just because it was dark.

Izuku slipped on his shoes and made sure they were tied tightly before slipping out the front door and locking it behind him. Then he started to wander. Without the goggles, he just looked like a normal, if slightly idiotic, teen on a midnight walk. He figured he could always slip the goggles on if he ran into any trouble, but until then they would just look suspicious.

The city looked strange at night. During the day, the streets were

crowded and Izuku was constantly being distracted by the sheer variety of quirks he saw, but at night, the streets were practically deserted. Most of the people he saw were either homeless or drunk or both, but they weren't really harming anyone, so Izuku didn't need to get involved. He made mental notes of where the darkest alleys were or where the streetlamps were burned out so that he could disappear quickly into the dark if he needed to, but there didn't seem to be any danger yet.

Izuku had been walking for twenty minutes and was starting to wonder if he'd even run into any crime tonight when he heard it.

"This can't be all you've got on you! What kinda guy doesn't even carry a cell phone?"

"I-i swear, that's all I have!"

Izuku ran to the mouth of an alley and saw a group of three large thugs ganging up on a smaller teen. He grabbed his goggles from his hoodie pocket and was about to run in when one of the thugs hit the brick wall with his fist and noticeably cracked it. Oh no, that guy was strong.

Izuku ducked behind a dumpter and tried to calm his breathing. There was no way he could fight guys like them! He didn't even have enough muscle to keep Kacchan from beating him up! If he ran in there right now, he'd die! And just because Izuku was kinda apathetic about the whole death thing at the moment didn't mean he was ready to walk into certain death. Especially when that death was almost guaranteed to be extremely painful.

But Izuku couldn't just do nothing! The kid was probably really scared, and he was starting to plead with the thugs, so Izuku couldn't just leave him. He needed to be saved. But...Izuku couldn't do that, could he? He really was a useless deku wasn't he? What was he even good at?

You can't do anything, Deku. Kacchan had said a couple weeks ago. Well, he said that all the time, but that was the particular instance that came to mind. *The only thing you're good at is running away.*

Izuku froze. He was good at running away! Most of the time when Kacchan beat him up, it was because Izuku was trying to defend someone else, but if he was going after Izuku himself, he was usually able to run fast enough to avoid a beating. Izuku stood and ran, unnoticed by the thugs or their victim.

It was a crazy plan and might very well get him caught on his first day as a vigilante, but he had to try.

Izuku peeked around the corner and sure enough, Amplifier was talking to a fan. He'd spent so much time watching hero fights over the years that he practically had every hero's patrol route memorized, but he'd never thought it would come in handy for anything besides taking notes. Still, there were only a few heroes that were active at night, but Amplifier was one of them, mostly because she fit well into the bar and nightlife scene and was able to control most of the drunks. She was also the closest to the mugging Izuku had witnessed.

Making sure his goggles were secure and his hood was up, Izuku grabbed a medium sized rock and chucked it at Amplifier, wincing when it hit her on the arm. He hoped he hadn't hurt her.

"What? Who did that?"

Izuku waited until Amplifier saw him, then gave her a shaky smile so that she knew his attack had been intentional. Then he ran.

"Hey! Kid, get back here!"

He glanced behind him and smiled in triumph when he saw that she was following him. He didn't really know how fast Amplifier could run, but she had to be in shape if she was a pro. Izuku sped up both so that they could get to the mugging faster and so that she wouldn't catch him. The alley was just around the next corner…

"Kid! Stop!"

"Help!"

"Shut up!"

Izuku ducked into a doorway and watched as Amplifier looked torn. On the one hand, she wanted to go after the punk kid that had thrown a rock at her, but on the other, the kid being mugged was obviously in more immediate danger. She cursed then ran into the alley to stop the mugging.

Izuku smiled, ran over to one of the buildings bordering the alley and started climbing the fire escape. Yeah, it probably wasn't very vigilante-like to stay and watch the fight, but...well, it wasn't like he was actually a vigilante anyway, right?

Izuku ended up watching the entire fight from the roof. His fingers twitched and he decided that he'd have to add a portable notebook to his vigilante outfit. Amplifier's quirk was better for evacuation, since her voice quirk was all volume and very little power, but she was able to imitate some of Present Mic's moves here since it was a small space and her opponents were in very close range. Mostly though, she used some form of mixed martial arts to take down the thugs.

Hmm...Izuku stood and started imitating some of her moves to get them down in his brain. If he ever wanted to actually *fight* anyone, it'd be good to have at least some ideas of what to do, even if he didn't actually have any formal training. He'd have to set aside some time to practice every day if he wanted to get better, but well...watch and learn, right?

Izuku smiled as Amplifier finished fighting the last thug and went to comfort the victim. He'd done it! He'd saved that kid! Well, *he* hadn't actually done it, but he'd led Amplifier to the fight! After the thugs had all been subdued, Izuku climbed back down to the street and ran off to find another crime to stop.

He may not be as strong as Kacchan, but he could still save people by playing to his strengths. And what was a useless deku like him good at?

Running away!

Chapter End Notes

Well, there is a reason this is subtitled *the green guide*...

Burning

Chapter Summary

Izuku continues to live his life as a not-technically-a-vigilante.

Izuku's everything hurt. How far had he ended up running last night? It couldn't have been more than a few miles, right? He'd come across two more muggings after that first one, so had to run to pick up a hero, then had to run back to the crime...okay, so maybe he'd run quite a bit, but still, he shouldn't be *this* sore, should he?

"Izuku, you're going to be late for school!"

Izuku groaned and forced himself out of bed. He must be even more out of shape than he'd thought. He'd definitely have to change that if he wanted to keep outrunning heroes. Izuku smiled as he got dressed. He'd *saved* people last night.

After giving his mom a quick kiss on the cheek, Izuku was out the door and on his way to school. He had to walk carefully to avoid limping, but he'd had more than enough practice with hiding injuries that hiding sore muscles wasn't nearly as difficult as he'd been afraid it would be. Hopefully Kacchan wouldn't want to use Izuku as quirk practice before class, with how sore he was he might not be able to run away fast enough.

Izuku frowned. Would he be able to go out tonight? He needed to be pretty fast to outrun heroes, so if he was too sore, he might get caught. But it had been so...satisfying? Izuku didn't know if it was the rush he liked or if it was as simple as saving people, but either way, he didn't want to wait to get back out there. Stretching helped with soreness, didn't it? He'd have to start stretching every night before he left so he didn't hurt himself. Maybe he should look up warm-ups too?

Izuku was so distracted planning his new nightly routine that he didn't see one of Kacchan's lackey's stick out his foot to trip him until he was already falling. He hit the ground hard and the contents of his backpack scattered all over the hall. The other students simply pretended not to see as they trampled his notes and Izuku felt his eyes start to water.

"Look guys! Deku's clumsy *and* a crybaby!"

Izuku tried to blink back the tears as he scrambled over the floor, trying to pick up his papers before they were ripped beyond repair. There was a pair of teachers chatting a little further down the hall, but they didn't so much as glance at Izuku even when he cried out as one of the meaner students stepped on his fingers.

"Oh sorry, Deku! I didn't see you there." The kid's smile gave away his insincerity, not that Izuku had been expecting an actual apology anyway. He finished shoving everything back into his bag and stood to get to class, trying to avoid everyone's eyes as he wiped away the tears.

"He's such a useless weaking, why does he even exist?"

Izuku kept his head down and did his best to ignore the whispers as he walked into the classroom and made his way to his seat. Kacchan was still refusing to look at him, which Izuku understood. Kacchan hadn't asked for Izuku to run in to save him, so he must still be mad about that. Izuku should probably apologize, shouldn't he? But knowing Kacchan, that might make the whole thing worse. He should just leave it alone for now, right? If things got worse, he would apologize, but until then maybe Kacchan would just forget about it or chalk the whole thing up to Deku being an idiot.

Though, it *was* strange that Kacchan hadn't said a single word to him since he'd stopped him on the street after the sludge villain attack. Normally, if their other classmates tried to do something, Kacchan would come along and do it better to prove that he was still the best, so since everyone had decided to be crueler to Izuku...well, he just thought it would make a lot of sense for Kacchan to use this situation to assert his dominance.

So why wasn't he?

Izuku quickly silenced what he was mentally calling his vigilante alarm and rolled out of bed. His soreness had gradually decreased throughout the day, but it hadn't completely gone away, so he'd probably have to pace himself tonight…

Still in his pajamas, Izuku leaned over to touch his toes and grimaced as his legs protested against the stretch. He then moved one foot back so he could stretch his calf better. He'd spent an hour that afternoon just looking up different types of stretches, specifically stretches that were good for people who did a lot of running. He'd never actually realized how important flexibility was to physical activity!

He spent the next half-hour just running through the stretches he'd researched until he was at least marginally less sore and stiff, then got dressed in his vigilante outfit just like he had the night before. This time, however, he grabbed a small green notebook that he'd bought on the way home and stuffed it and a few pens in his back pocket before heading out. He'd have to figure out how to notate the moves that the heroes used if he wanted to study them later, since there wouldn't be time to do his usual detailed drawings in the middle of a fight. Would stick figures be enough?

As he walked, Izuku thought through the patrol schedules he'd memorized. It was a Thursday night, so who would be out? Well, Rock Lock often worked later during the week so he could take the weekends off, probably to be with his family if what he said in interviews was any indication. Then there was Enigma, but her gigantification quirk might allow her to catch him too quickly, so he should probably try to avoid using her if possible. He might be able to catch Death Arms if the hero decided to stay out later for whatever reason. Mt. Lady probably wouldn't be patrolling at night if her media-mongering debut was any indication, so she wouldn't be any help. Who else?

It was surprising, now that he thought about it, just how few heroes patrolled at night. If he was out walking at two in the afternoon rather than two in the morning, he'd be able to have his pick of at least five or six heroes on any given day, but...well he couldn't get mad at heroes for getting tired. But from what Izuku had seen the night before, there wasn't less crime at night. If anything, there might even be *more* crime at night, since there weren't as many people out to be witnesses and there weren't as many heroes patrolling the streets. If Izuku were a villain, he'd probably be completely nocturnal for those reasons alone.

Izuku sighed, hopefully Amplifier wouldn't get too annoyed with him if he had to use her again. He'd already used her twice last night and she probably had better things that she usually did during her patrols, so he'd have to try to spread it out as much as possible, at least until he got strong enough to start fighting criminals himself. But Izuku had decided that the running had two purposes. The first was obviously to get heroes to stop crimes in progress, but the second was to build muscle and stamina so he stood a chance when and if he ever felt confident enough to fight.

Not that anyone would care if anything happened to you anyway.

Izuku shook his head. He didn't want to die before he had the chance to save anyone. Besides, he knew that getting a bully to change his targets was temporary at best. If he died too quickly at the start of a fight before the real victim had a chance to get away, then he really wouldn't have done any good. Not to mention that if he died too quickly it might just make the villain *more* angry and end up making things worse for the person he'd been trying to help. Not that anyone would really be surprised if that happened, he was a useless deku after all.

Izuku caught movement in the corner of his eye and looked through the window of the 24-hour convenience store he sometimes bought snacks at to see someone threatening the cashier with an electricity quirk. Who was the closest hero to here? *Rock Lock* .

Izuku ignored the burning in his legs as he took off running as fast as he could.

"So, how's the wife?" Amplifier asked. "Getting ready to pop?"

Rock Lock shook his head, "She's not due for another few months. She's already complaining about how big she is though. I just tell her that means there's more of her to love."

"Oh, smooth, Romeo, smooth."

Usually Rock Lock didn't stop to talk to other heroes, but it was a slow night and Amplifier had been chasing down a drunk that had been harassing women where she usually patrolled. He'd helped take him down by immobilizing his clothes, and she'd stuck around after the police had picked him up. Who knows, maybe he'd run into a situation where he could use the extra help.

"Well, there *is* a reason she fell in love...ow!"

Something hit him on his calf and he looked down to see...a rock? He whipped around to see who threw it and caught sight of what looked to be a kid in a green hoodie and goggles smile at him before running away.

"Let's go!" Amplifier started following the kid, but Rock Lock held her back.

"Why? He's just some hooligan, it's not gonna do any good to run him down."

Amplifier shook her head, “No, I saw the kid yesterday too and when I chased him, he led me straight to two different muggings. Don’t worry, we’re not gonna try and catch him, but if that kid throws a rock at you, he *wants* you to chase him.”

She started running again and Rock Lock shook his head as he followed. He still wasn’t convinced that chasing the kid was productive, but Amplifier had proven to be a decent hero, so he’d trust her for now. And well, it was a slow night, so if nothing else, following this kid was something to do.

Izuku stopped as soon as he realized that Rock Lock and Amplifier weren’t following him. Had Amplifier decided he wasn’t worth her time anymore? He hadn’t been *trying* to get her, but she’d been talking to Rock Lock and there wasn’t any time to go find another hero! Should he try to go find Death Arms? Probably, but by the time he got to Death Arms’ patrol route, the robber would be gone. He really was useless wasn’t he?

He couldn’t even get a hero correctly.

Izuku startled as he heard footsteps behind him and grinned as he saw Rock Lock and Amplifier running toward him. Rock Lock looked skeptical about the whole thing, but that didn’t matter right now, what mattered right now was making sure that the convenience store robber got caught.

Izuku took off and hoped that they weren’t too late. Situations like robberies could often take a turn for the worse extremely quickly. His breath was starting to get painful as he pushed himself even harder. They couldn’t be too late, they couldn’t!

Izuku didn’t know whether to laugh or cry as he turned the corner to see the robber leaving the store. Was the cashier okay? Izuku didn’t know what he would do if he wasn’t. Wait, how would the heroes know that the guy was a villain?

Izuku didn’t stop running, but leaned down and scooped up an empty soda can that someone had tossed on the sidewalk. He only hesitated a moment before he lobbed the can as hard as he could at the villain’s head. Hopefully this wouldn’t be the idiot move that killed him. Imagine what the kids at school would say.

Did you hear that Deku killed himself by throwing a soda can? Seriously, what a lame way to go, but what else did we expect from someone so

worthless?

The villain turned around in rage, then saw the heroes behind him and Izuku almost cried with relief when the villain decided to activate his electricity quirk and charged. Now the heroes wouldn't have any doubt on who they were supposed to attack!

Izuku dodged behind a parked car and used the car's rubber tire to shield him from the attack. He poked his head out and Izuku smiled as he saw that Rock Lock and Amplifier had engaged the villain. Now what? Oh, yeah! The cashier!

Izuku flung open the door and ran to the counter. The guy wasn't standing at the counter like he should be, so where was he? Had he gone to a back room to recover from the stress or was he…

"Help!"

The voice was soft and laced with pain, but a dead person couldn't talk, so that meant the cashier was alive! Izuku nearly panicked when he ran around the counter and saw the man lying on the ground, electrical burns covering most of his face and arms. Izuku was familiar with burns and those looked like they hurt. A lot.

He forced himself to calm down, but wasn't able to force a smile onto his face, "Sir, do you have a phone?"

"O-on the counter…"

Izuku hurried and dialed the police, "Yes, hello? There's a guy here with electrical burns, at least second or third degree. Yes, it was a villain attack, somebody robbed the convenience store on Randamu street. Yeah, we're still here, hurry!"

Izuku put the phone down and knelt beside the cashier, "Are you ok? Oh wait, obviously you're not okay, you just got robbed and you're hurt and…"

"How did you," the man rasped, "know about the robbery?"

"Oh, I, um, brought the heroes. They're fighting the guy outside. Oh, those burns look bad, let's get...ok, yeah."

Izuku stood and found the burn cream and bandages. It only took a few seconds, as he already knew exactly where they were kept because he bought them so frequently. Maybe he'd have to thank

Kacchan when this was all over? No, Kacchan would probably just find that annoying.

Izuku shook his head. He needed to focus. He grabbed a rag that was underneath the counter and ran over to the soda fountain to wet it with cold water, then started dabbing the wet washcloth on the burns, being extra careful not to rub so he didn't do any more damage to the skin.

"Ice?" the man asked as Izuku set to work. "It's so hot, wouldn't ice be better?"

Izuku shook his head, "No, ice can shock your system or make the area so numb you can't tell if further damage is being done. Don't worry, once we get the burn cream on, it'll hurt a little less. And I"m sure the paramedics will be able to give you something for pain when they get here."

The man nodded and closed his eyes and Izuku started to apply the cream. He was just wrapping the burns when the door opened and he heard Amplifier's voice.

"Kid? Are you in here? Is everyone ok? I could've sworn I saw him come in here..."

"I'm here, Amplifier." Izuku yelled. "The cashier got burned by that guy's quirk."

Amplifier walked around the counter and stopped when she saw Izuku treating the man's wounds, "Wow kid, you look like you know what you're doing."

Izuku shrugged, "I've had a lot of practice." He finished tying off the final bandage and stood. "I'd better leave this to you guys. I already called the ambulance, so they should be here any minute. You should probably stay with him until they get here though, I've heard electrical burns can be tricky."

Amplifier nodded and knelt beside the man as Izuku hurried toward where he thought the back entrance was. Just because he wasn't *technically* a vigilante didn't mean it was a good idea to stick around until the cops came, especially since the heroes were a lot more qualified to deal with the situation than he was anyway. At this point, Izuku would just get in the way.

"Kid." Izuku turned back to see Amplifier staring at him, "Thanks."

Izuku gave her a bright smile before he turned and left.

Now to find someone else to save.

Names

Chapter Summary

Izuku makes some progress.

Chapter Notes

Hello everyone! It's finals week at my university, so you know what that means...I'm slowing down! I'm going back to my "every four days" update schedule rather than my "every other day" update schedule. Fair warning that the transition is always somewhat awkward, so bear with me. If all goes as planned, I should return to my normal schedule at the beginning of May, but as always, I'll tell you when I'm changing things.
Also, trigger warning for this chapter for sexual assault. It doesn't go very far, but I didn't want you to be surprised if that's something that hurts you.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shota looked across the desk at Tsukauchi as he finished the paperwork for his latest arrest, “I heard you got yourself a new vigilante.”

Tsukauchi rolled his eyes, “If you can even call him that. The kid hasn’t actually *done* anything yet. His MO is that he’ll find a crime, then go and find a hero.”

“Seems like he’s doing some good then.”

Tsukauchi looked tired, “Yeah, but it turns out that most heroes don’t take kindly to having rocks thrown at them.”

Shota snorted, “He throws rocks at them?”

Tsukauchi nodded, “At least he’s not actually hitting them with the rocks anymore. The first week or so, the heroes all came in with mild bruises. A few days ago he started just tossing the rocks at their feet, though, so that’s an improvement. ”

“His goal was always to get the heroes’ attention, not hurt them, wasn’t it?” Shota said. “The rocks were just a way to make sure they chased him. He was probably trying to get them angry so they’d pay attention to him.”

“That’s what we decided too.” Tsukauchi offered Shota a cup of coffee that he gratefully accepted. “Word of him has been spreading pretty fast though and heroes in the area are starting to recognize him. That’s probably part of why he’s stopped hitting them with the rocks. Once he’s got their attention, heroes know that they need to follow him. Apparently, he’s pretty good at sniffing out crimes too, and most of the heroes don’t mind the extra help, considering he’s not really hurting anything.”

“What’s he look like?” Shota asked. “In case I come across him?”

“Well, he’s kind of plain as far as vigilantes go.” Tuskauchi said, handing him a sketch of the vigilante. “He wears a dark green hoodie with matching goggles, then black jeans. The most flashy thing about him is his red shoes, but even those don’t appear to be a statement piece.”

“Hmm,” Shota looked at the sketch. There really wasn’t anything that special or eyecatching about him. “It’s strange, most vigilantes I’ve met try to go for something more distinctive. This guy kinda reminds me of myself, he doesn’t care what he looks like, as long as he gets the job done.”

“Yeah, most vigilantes are failed heroes, so they *see* themselves as heroes, but this kid is different.” Tuskauchi said. “He doesn’t even try to fight the villains!”

“You’ve said *kid* twice now.” Shota looked at the sketch again. “Just how old is he? Early twenties?”

Tsukauchi shook his head, “Amplifier’s the only one that has had any close contact with him, but she said that, based on his voice and the way he held himself, he’s a teenager, and a young one at that. She pegged him at around 12 or 13 because he was so short and skinny, but I think it’s more likely that we’re looking in the 16-18 range. Since most vigilantes are failed heroes, he's got to be old enough to have taken and failed the entrance exams.”

“But this kid *doesn’t* see himself as a hero the way other vigilantes do.” Shota pointed out. “Crawler, Pop Step, and even Stendall all saw themselves as heroes even without licenses, and they each came up with their own particular brand of dress and behavior. This kid doesn’t even fight. Has he even given himself a name yet?”

“No, even when he spoke with Amplifier he didn’t introduce himself.” Tsukauchi said. “But the heroes who’ve encountered him so far have

taken to calling him the Green Guide."

Shota snorted, "*The Green Guide*? Seriously? They couldn't think of anything less obvious?"

Tsukauchi shrugged, "Well, the kid wears green and leads them to crimes in progress. I don't know, the alliteration is kinda catchy."

Shota rolled his eyes, "Yeah, sure, cause that's obviously super important to the kid." He sighed. "It's just…I hope he keeps staying out of fights. If he gets in any deeper, he'll only end up getting himself killed."

Izuku wandered the now familiar streets in search of crime. He'd been doing this for two weeks now. *Two weeks*! He still hadn't mustered the courage to get in a single fight, but the heroes were actually starting to recognize and trust him. He'd never realized just how lax heroes were toward vigilantes. Maybe it was because he wasn't actually doing a lot of vigilante-type stuff but the heroes never tried to track him down after a fight or anything.

And Izuku was actually starting to get stronger! The first few days had been terrifyingly painful just from the dramatic increase in physical activity, but his body was starting to get used to it now. Maybe he was just imagining it, but when he'd gotten dressed before going out, his calves had been noticeably firmer. And he was *definitely* getting more flexible from all the stretching he did before and after his patrols.

He was also getting more familiar with the sounds that happened every night. There had been a few times in which he peeked into an alley expecting to find a fight, only to find that it was just a cat that had knocked over a trash-can lid, but now he was getting better at recognizing that sound, even if he still double checked to make sure since he didn't want to miss anything.

That familiarity with nighttime sounds was why a slight rustling accompanied by what sounded like muffled whimpers was enough to raise red flags. He rushed in the direction of the sound and his eyes widened when he saw a guy with some kind of mole quirk pressing a brunette woman against the brick wall using one of his massive hands to cover her mouth while the other wandered…to less innocent places.

He should get a hero. Which ones were close to here again? But…Izuku had watched a lot of fights, not only over the last two

weeks, but during his entire hero obsessed lifetime. He was familiar with battle stances and how to not get knocked down by an opponent and this guy looked like a strong breeze would blow him over. Probably, the only reason that the girl hadn't been able to escape was because he was so much bigger than she was. The guy was completely off balance!

Izuku should *really* get a hero, he was wasting time, but his mind couldn't help running through how he'd beat this guy if he had to fight him. He had a mole quirk, which meant that he probably relied mostly on his sense of smell, since his eyesight was most likely poor. He also didn't have good situation awareness, since Izuku had been standing there for almost a minute by this point and he still hadn't noticed. Oh no! He'd been standing there for almost a minute! He needed to go get a hero!

Unfortunately, the woman had more situational awareness than her attacker and right as Izuku was about to turn and run, she caught his eye. Her muffled screams got more frantic and Izuku couldn't help himself as he ran forward to save her.

Crap, crap, crap! What was he supposed to do? This guy was so big and Izuku still didn't know how to fight at all! Umm, ok, the mole quirk meant that the guy was mostly blind, but he could still probably smell Izuku if he wasn't careful, so...Izuku glanced around and saw a half-full takeout container on the floor by one of the dumpsters.

He picked it up and swallowed down his own disgust, "Hey Moleman!"

Oh, Kacchan would be ashamed of that insult. It wasn't even an insult, it was just an observation that was phrased as an insult. Like deku. But even if it wasn't very creative, it did the trick and Moleman turned around only to get a face full of half-rotten takeout. His heightened sense of smell would no longer be a problem.

Moleman let go of the woman as he pawed desperately at his face to wipe away the stench, but Izuku didn't give him much of a chance as he lunged for his legs. The guy was already off balance, so if Izuku could just trip him…

The man fell hard onto his back and Izuku smiled briefly before he realized that down did not mean out. Moleman grabbed Izuku's leg and yanked him down as well, then let go as he scrambled to his feet and kicked Izuku in the gut. Izuku grimaced, but he'd been kicked

before, so he just shrugged off the pain and got up.

Okay, so plan A didn't work, what was plan B? Who was he kidding, he hadn't even had a plan A! Ok, so how did the heroes beat villains. Well, they beat them with their quirks, but that wasn't going to work here. So what could Izuku...wait, Midnight had her whip right? That's how she beat female villains or villains that could hold their breath for a long time. So if he couldn't use a quirk to defeat Moleman, maybe he could use some kind of weapon?

He really should have thought this through. He had a pencil in his back pocket, but that was it. Moleman suddenly reached out and slammed Izuku against the wall, holding him a foot off the ground by his throat. Izuku struggled to breathe as the hand started to crush his windpipe and tried to blink away the black that was starting to encroach on the edges of his vision. Was...was he going to die? Had the girl gotten away? He glanced over to the side and saw her watching the fight with wide eyes.

No! He couldn't die yet! Izuku grabbed his pencil and jammed it into Moleman's hand. Moleman screamed and let Izuku go. That trick probably wasn't going to work a second time and Moleman was getting more angry by the minute. What else could he use?

Well, he'd need to knock the guy out. He wasn't strong enough yet to do that by punching like All Might did, but some kind of blunt force trauma would probably be best. Oh, that sounded so bad, maybe it was for the best that Izuku couldn't be a hero.

As Moleman recovered from being stabbed, Izuku glanced around the alley again until he saw a dented can of beans that someone had thrown away. He ran over to it as Moleman charged and grabbed his legs. Izuku slammed onto the cement belly-first, but managed to grab the can right as Moleman started to drag him backwards.

Izuku twisted his body and slammed the can into Moleman's hands with enough force to make him let go. His body was running on pure adrenaline at this point and it seemed like everything was simultaneously going too fast and too slow. Izuku managed to dodge another grab and used his can to bludgeon Moleman's shoulder.

Moleman aimed a punch for his head, but he was broadcasting his movements the way Kacchan sometimes did, so it was easy enough for Izuku to duck. The punch threw Moleman off balance again and Izuku hit him with some weird mix of a punch and a backhand, making him

stumble back.

Izuku didn't wait for Moleman to recover before he launched his next attack. The can got slippery as Moleman's nose started to bleed. Or maybe some of that blood was from Izuku's knuckles? Izuku didn't stop hitting though until his opponent was on the ground. He waited tensely for a long moment until he was certain that Moleman was knocked out, then turned to the girl he'd just saved.

"Are you ok?"

She looked at him in shock, "Am *I* ok? You just fought a guy twice your size!"

Izuku looked down at the guy on the floor, "Actually, I think he's probably more like three times my size, I'm pretty small, but I don't think his size is just because of his quirk…"

"Earth to kid! Are you actually ok? He looked like he hurt you…"

Izuku shrugged, "It's nothing I'm not used to, don't worry about it."

The woman didn't look any less worried, but Izuku decided that trying to reassure her probably wouldn't do any good. He turned to leave, but almost tripped over Moleman who was still unconscious on the ground.

"Oh! Almost forgot about him, um, hmm, I should really get some zip ties or something to bring out, I wonder...do you have any zip ties on you?"

The woman let out a stressed huff of laughter, "No? Are you telling me you ran into the fight without any way to tie the guy up?"

Izuku shrunk back a little, "I normally just run away and get the heroes. I'm sorry, I'm really bad at this. I'm not even a real vigilante."

"No, no, you're doing great." The woman tried to reassure him and Izuku gave her a shaky smile. He wasn't doing great.

"Um, there's got to be something around here we can use…" He muttered. "Maybe if I can find some rope? Oh, I can tear this old t-shirt into strips. Probably won't stop him for long, but hopefully the police will arrive before that'll be a problem…"

The woman stared at him as he tied up Moleman as tightly as he

could, “Um, do you need me to do anything?”

Izuku shook his head, “If you could call the cops after I leave, that’d be great. I mean, you should probably stick around so you can explain what happened, cause otherwise they might not actually be able to arrest this guy, but if he starts waking up, you should probably run.”

The woman nodded and Izuku grabbed the fire escape. He didn’t want her to have to wait too long, which she probably would have to if he just walked out onto the street.

“Wait!”

Izuku stopped with his hands still on the fire escape, “Yes? Are you hurt? Do you need me to give you first aid?”

The woman shook her head, “No, you just never told me your vigilante name. What am I supposed to call you, Green Guy?”

Izuku shrugged, “Sure, if that works. I don’t really care what people call me, I just wanna help people.”

With that, he turned around and scrambled up the fire escape. He saw the woman getting out her phone as he got to the roof, so that was good. He should probably try to take the rooftops home so he didn’t run into any of the cops as they drove to the alley. He’d never hopped from building to building before, but it couldn’t be too hard, right?

Izuku backed up and got a running start as he prepared to jump, only the chicken out with a yelp as he arrived at the edge of the roof. He tried to calm his breathing down. That...was a lot scarier than he’d hoped it would be. He could try again, but...he really didn’t want to. It was probably best not to try again, anyway, since if he jumped and ended up falling then they’d think it was suicide and that would defeat his whole purpose of being a vigilante which was so that no one would get hurt when he died.

He gave a determined nod, found another fire escape that led into the next alley over, and climbed down. Then he lowered his hood, put away his goggles and started walking home, grimacing as the adrenaline wore off and he realized how much pain he was in. He should call it a night, he wouldn’t be able to run fast enough to help anyone in this state.

Good thing he already had practice treating his own injuries.

Hina Yu smiled as she watched the vigilante disappear and dialed her boss. She'd call the police in a minute, but they would ask her to stay on the line until someone arrived and she didn't want to wait to make this call.

"Yu? What are you doing calling me at three in the morning?"

"I have tomorrow's headline!"

"What? What happened?"

She grinned, "I was just saved by a new vigilante, I'm fine, don't worry. He seems to just be starting out, so I'm positive no other paper has talked about him yet. He said he often gets heroes to respond to crimes that would otherwise be overlooked and he's super sweet and nervous. I think he might be a teenager."

"Really?" Her boss sounded much more awake. "That *is* a headline, maybe not front page, but there's definitely a story there. Get me a peice by morning and we'll run it on the website. If it gets enough hits I'll give you the go ahead to do more research and we'll do a full piece by the end of the week. What's your vigilante's name?"

Hina frowned. He'd said that Green Guy was fine, but a name like that wouldn't sell any papers. She needed something flashier, something that would make people curious when they saw it in the headline. Well, he *was* green, and he didn't seem to care what people called him, so…

"Viridian." she said. "Let's call him Viridian."

Chapter End Notes

> You guys remember that pony-tailed reporter from the beginning of the USJ arc? So do I.

Fame

Chapter Summary

Characters react to Viridian's fancy new name.

Chapter Notes

So! I have some fanart that I haven't gotten around to sharing! I shared this picture on my discord before I even started publishing the story and I got so many good drawings! Oh, I love getting fanart so much!
nearlyartist
Mayonaise (uncolored)
Whirl and another!
Miri

Shota tightened his capture weapon and pushed the villain more firmly against the wall, “It’s illogical to resist, just tell me what I need to know.”

“Dude, it’s just some drugs!” The villain said. “If you have a problem with that then maybe you should get out more, I’ve got a couple samples that’d be good for a first timer.”

Shota rolled his eyes, “Yes, offer to sell drugs to the hero that’s arresting you. And honestly, if it were just party drugs, I probably *wouldn’t* care that much, but this is Trigger, so I’ll ask you one more time, where do you get the drugs.”

“Fuck you!”

Shota sighed, “Fine, have it your way.” He dialed Tsukauchi and waited until the detective’s half awake voice groaned over the line. “Could you send a car? I’ve got a perp to bring in for processing and interrogation.”

Tsukauchi looked up from his paperwork as Eraser walked in the villain he’d just arrested. The guy was probably a low level dealer like the others that Eraser had brought in, but there was always the hope that the next villain would know who was behind Trigger.

“Interrogation room eight is open, Eraser. You can put him in there.”

Eraser grunted in acknowledgement and dragged the thug toward the back of the station as Tsukauchi poured them both some coffee. He'd have to go interrogate the guy later, since he was one of the detectives on the Trigger investigation, but that could wait a bit until this paperwork was done. Leaving the perps to wait for a few minutes helped establish control of the situation anyway.

Shota finally sat down on the other side of his desk and grabbed the coffee, then grimaced, "Tsukauchi, you didn't mention that the station had switched out their coffee for paint thinner."

Tsukauchi just laughed, "Oh, you're just mad that Musutafu doesn't have your favorite cat cafe."

"What can I say, the Hotta brothers make a mean cup of coffee." Shota shrugged. "You got those forms? I want to get this over with as fast as possible."

Tsukauchi shook his head, but grabbed the villain intake form from the drawer at his right and handed it to Shota, who started to fill it out with both annoyance and boredom. Paperwork wasn't *fun* by any means, and Shota would rather be patrolling the streets looking for more info for the Trigger investigation, but bureaucracy was a part of life, so he had to put up with it.

They kept working in companionable silence for a few minutes until the doors to the station flew open again and Amplifier came bounding in with a villain in tow and took him straight to the holding cell.

"Why is she so loud?" Shota grumbled.

Tsukauchi raised an eyebrow, "She hasn't even said anything yet."

"Exactly. Even her presence is loud enough to draw attention, it's annoying."

"Oh don't be a spoilsport Eraser." Amplifier grinned as she grabbed a chair to sit beside him. "You're just mad because you wouldn't be noticed by a rat."

"That's intentional, you know." Shota said as Tsukauchi handed Amplifier the villain intake form. "People don't notice me unless I *want* them to notice me."

"Maybe that's why you haven't run into our little vigilante guide yet." Amplifier said. "He just doesn't know you exist."

Shota rolled his eyes, “I think it’s much more likely that UA is out of his comfort zone, and since I always stick to that area unless I’m following a lead, we just haven’t had a chance to run into each other yet.”

“Sure,” Amplifier grinned, “whatever you say Eraser.”

“Was that villain one of the Green Guide’s?” Tsukauchi asked.

“That depends on your definition.” Amplifier said. “If you mean, did he lead me to the guy, then yes, but if you mean did he take the guy down himself, then no.”

Shota frowned, “I thought the Green Guide didn’t ever take down villains on his own.”

Tsukauchi sighed, “He didn’t, at least until last night when we responded to a call about an attempted assault, only to find the perp already knocked out and tied up with pieces of an old T-shirt. The victim said the guy who did it was a kid in a green hoodie and goggles.”

Shota rubbed his temples to try and ease the coming headache. This problem child was going to be the death of him. “How? From what you told me, the kid is skin and bones, how did he take down an actual villain?”

“With a tin can.”

Shota stopped and stared at Tsukauchi, he *had* to have heard that wong, “...What?”

Tsukauchi nodded, “You heard me right. According to the victim, the Green Guide started fighting the guy, but couldn’t get the upper hand until he grabbed a can of beans and started beating the guy with it like it was a pair of improvised brass knuckles. It was pretty brutal, but also effective.”

Shota didn’t know whether to be proud of the kid for his quick thinking under pressure or angry because he ran straight into danger. Probably both.

“Ahh!” Amplifier squealed. “Our little boy is growing up! Taking down villains all by himself and everything!”

Shota scowled, “I don’t think that’s a good thing.”

“Yeah, I think I have to agree with Eraser on this one.” Tsukauchi said. “The victim said that he seemed in over his head. I’d much rather he kept running to get heroes rather than running into fights he’s unprepared for.”

“Oh, come on!” Amplifier groaned. “You guys gotta admit that beating a criminal with nothing more than your wits and a tin can is pretty impressive.”

Shota just shot her an unimpressed look, “Nothing more than wits, a tin can, *and* a probable speed quirk.”

“Come on!”

Shota sighed, “Fine, I’ll admit that he’s quick-witted and definitely good at using improvised weapons, but the kid obviously lacks the required training. I don’t want him getting in fights if he’s just gonna get himself killed.”

“Well, Crawler and Pop Step didn’t have any formal training either when they first started out.” Tsukauchi pointed out.

“That may be true, but they also had Knuckleduster to mentor them and get them out of any tough scrapes.” Shota argued. “The Green Guide doesn’t even have that.”

“Well then maybe you should fill that role.” Amplifier grinned.

Shota glared at her, “I have enough brats to worry about at UA, thanks. I don’t need to add teaching a wannabe on top of that.”

Amplifier shrugged, “Just a thought, Eraser, considering how protective you are of a kid you’ve never even met. Oh, and about the kid’s name, I don’t think he’s going by Green Guide anymore.”

Tsukauchi furrowed his brow in confusion, “What? Why change it?”

Amplifier looked between the two of them in shock, “Did you guys not see the article this morning?”

They shook their heads and Amplifier smiled and got out her phone, “Apparently the woman he saved last night is a reporter. Since he didn’t give her a vigilante name to call him, she’s named him Viridian. Kinda catchy, right?”

Tsukauchi frowned, “How did I not see this?”

Amplifier shrugged, “Probably because the keywords were wrong. You’ve most likely got your computer set up to ping you if the news mentions a *Green Guide*, but because this reporter used a different name, it didn’t trip your system. I like Viridian better anyway.”

“It *is* easier to say…”

“Vigilantes gaining public notoriety is never a good thing.” Shota grumbled. “It goes straight to their heads and they end up putting themselves in even more danger to impress their *fans*.” He sighed. “The kid is probably soaking up his fame as we speak.”

Izuku was freaking out.

He couldn’t get that article out of his head, even as he ran around the streets leading heroes to crimes. When Izuku had seen the article on his way home from school, he’d had to fight off a panic attack and he almost hadn’t gone out that night. He didn’t *want* to be famous. The more people paid attention to him, the more likely it was that they’d figure out that he was quirkless and the faster he could say goodbye to any positive reputation he’d gained. He wasn’t even *technically* a vigilante, so why did he have to have a name?

But apparently that woman he’d saved was a reporter? So she’d written about how he’d taken down the villain and she’d apparently done some digging to see that he normally stayed out of the fights himself. Izuku didn’t deserve to have articles written about him like the heroes did, so he couldn’t help feeling like he’d tricked that reporter somehow. He hadn’t been trying to fool her into thinking that he wasn’t worthless, but that’s apparently what happened since her article was so positive. He’d just been trying to help her.

Which was ultimately why he was out on the streets again tonight. Sure, he wasn’t necessarily *happy* about the article, but he also wasn’t about to let that stop him from helping people either. And he *was* helping people! He was helping the heroes find the people that needed saving! He was doing *good!*

But he should probably start carrying weapons if he ever planned to jump into a fight again. Between tending to his injuries and everything with the article, he’d completely forgotten about adding weapons to his costume that afternoon, but it wasn’t a big deal. He was still covered in scrapes and bruises from his fight with Moleman last night, so it wouldn't be a good idea to get into any more fights so soon, so he didn’t need the weapons quite yet, but it was still a good

thing to brainstorm.

He'd almost considered getting a baseball bat, but there were a couple problems with that. While it *would* be a useful bludgeon-type weapon, it was too bulky. He wouldn't be able to easily run if he had to be constantly hefting the bat, so it would actually prevent him from saving people, which was the exact opposite of what he wanted. Not to mention the fact that he'd never been into any sports, so if he came home with a baseball bat, Mom would ask way too many questions that Izuku really didn't want to answer.

His weapons would need to be small. He needed to be able to fit them in his pockets so he could run easily and so he could go incognito if he needed to, so that meant that anything like a staff was out. Maybe a…

He heard someone calling for help and peeked in on the situation before running off to get a hero. He could worry about what weapons he needed later.

For now, though, Izuku had people to save.

Trigger

Chapter Summary

Izuku gets some weapons, *and* gets to use them!

When Izuku rolled out of bed and immediately started his nightly stretches before getting dressed in his vigilante clothes. Was it weird that the middle of the night was turning into his favorite time of day? It probably was. Kacchan would probably think he was crazy for wanting to go out in the middle of the night to bother heroes.

Izuku snuck out to the front door, but froze with his hand on the doorknob. Hadn't he decided yesterday that he *really* needed to take weapons with him? He hesitated another long moment while he debated the merits of just going out weaponless again. He could always just rely on what trash he could find, right? It had worked just fine last time.

But while he *could* do that, he probably shouldn't. Mom would kill him if she knew he was running into fights without any kind of weapon or plan of attack and while he wasn't planning on her finding out, it was the principle of the thing.

So something small and easy to hide, but also something he could grab quickly so he didn't cut too much into his vigilante time tonight. Hmmm...cut...maybe he should bring some sort of knife?

He turned on his phone's flashlight and went into the kitchen. Were there any knives that Mom wouldn't miss? He obviously couldn't take any from the knife block, they'd be missed immediately. He might be able to get away with taking a steak knife, but...it probably wouldn't be a good idea to put a knife in his pocket without any kind of sheaf, would it? He'd just end up cutting himself as he tried to run get heroes and that wouldn't do any good.

He needed a knife with some kind of protection already built in. Izuku smiled as an idea occurred to him and he started to rummage as quietly as he could in the junk drawer. It took him awhile to find what he was looking for since they used it so infrequently and he was starting to get scared that they'd actually lost it when his hand closed around the old box cutter. Izuku practiced extending and retracting the blade a few times to get a feel for it. Yeah, the cuts wouldn't be very deep, but they'd be enough to distract a villain in a pinch so

Izuku could run away or find another opening. It was a good start.

Now onto a bludgeoning weapon. On a whim, Izuku went to the pantry and grabbed a can of soup. Running around with a can wouldn't be good in the long run, since it was heavy and hard to hold, but he could always replace it with something more streamlined later. Besides, it had worked so well last time that he knew it was reliable.

A can and a boxcutter didn't feel like enough, though. Izuku was going to be fighting quirkless against people with quirks, so he probably needed a few more weapons than most vigilantes did. He wished he had something like tonfa, but he didn't know how to use them and they were just a bit larger than he was comfortable carrying around in his hoodie pocket. Some kind of stick would work pretty well, though, if only...Izuku quickly went to the hall closet where Mom kept her old crafting supplies. Hadn't she done a project with wooden dowels a few months ago? If Izuku was lucky, there'd be a few left.

He grinned when he saw the dowels standing up against the wall. He grabbed two of the shorter pieces, each about twenty centimeters long and three around, but one was slightly shorter than the other. Izuku hoped that the difference wouldn't throw him too off balance if he had to use them in a fight.

Now that he finally felt armed enough, Izuku turned off his flashlight and walked out the front door. He was ready.

Izuku pressed himself against the wall to make sure he was completely hidden in the shadows while he watched the thugs. He had heard raised voices, so ran toward the side street and was currently hiding in an alley, but the thugs weren't actually *doing* anything. There were about ten of them and they were probably part of a gang or something, but they seemed to be joking around and roughhousing, not doing anything nefarious.

"When did your friend say she was coming?" One of the thugs asked. "And why did we have to meet her *here*? There are flies everywhere, man!"

"Oh, stop being such a baby." That guy seemed to be the leader. He had green skin and what looked like thorns on his face, which made Izuku wonder what his quirk was. "She'll be here soon."

Izuku shook his head and turned away. There were other people who

needed his help, there was no point in waiting around here. He was just about to leave when the first thug cried out in pain and Izuku whipped around to see him clutching a hand to his neck, “Damn fly bit me!”

Within a few seconds, each of the thugs slapped a hand to their necks and cried out. Those must be some vicious flies if they bit all of them, but why bite all of them at once? Izuku should run, those bites looked painful and he didn’t necessarily want to have to explain to his mom how he got an insect bite when he was supposedly at home in bed. He turned to leave again.

“You bitch! I’ll kill you!”

Izuku watched in shock as the thugs all started powering up and *attacking each other.* What? And they all had such powerful quirks too! He thought quirks this powerful were rare, and the more powerful your quirk, the more likely you would be encouraged to be a hero, so a group of thugs all with powerful quirks was unheard of. But they were going crazy, like they were on drugs or something, but they hadn’t even been smoking!

Just then, one of the thugs caught sight of him, “Boys, look, we’ve got a toothpick to crush!”

Izuku froze and swallowed thickly as every one of the thugs turned toward him. Time to run.

Shota crouched on a rooftop overlooking the bar district. Normally this was Amplifier’s territory, but she’d come down with the flu and had to call in sick, so Shota had agreed to cover her shift. He would usually be trying to track down leads on the Trigger case, but he hadn’t gotten any new information recently. He was starting to get frustrated with the whole thing. Trigger had been in Japan for years now and so far they had only been able to arrest low level thugs and pawns and were no closer to finding the people behind the Villain Factory.

He wouldn’t admit it, but Shota was scared. People didn’t do things for no reason, so there had to be some eventual goal to using drugs to temporarily turn normal people into powerful villains, but Shota couldn’t see it. Trigger on it’s own was bad enough, but the stuff it was sometimes cut with made the user violent and prone to attacking anyone in sight. And that wasn’t even counting the people who had been abducted and had their bodies modified to accommodate their

more powerful quirks.

Hopefully, the people behind the Villain Factory weren't doing this to gear up to a major attack, but there was no way to know if they were. The dealers didn't know anything about the production of the drug and even those higher up on the supply chain hadn't known anything about the kidnappings. Shota was just ready for this case to be over already, he was sick of not knowing anything.

There was a crash off to his left and Shota turned to see a kid running as fast as he could as he was chased by a mob of powered-up villains. The kid was wearing a green hoodie and goggles and kept glancing around as he ran like he was looking for someone. Was this the new vigilante Amplifier had told him about? It must be, but didn't Viridian lead *heroes* to *villains* and not the other way around?

As the group got closer, Shota decided it didn't matter much. He needed to stop them before any civilians could be injured, which in the bar district was a distinct possibility. Damn problem child, why couldn't he have left the villains where they were?

Shota jumped down, startling Viridian, who stared at him with wide eyes that Shota could barely see behind his goggles, then tripped and landed flat on his stomach, making Shota snort.

"Stay away from the fight, kid." He said. "I'll handle this."

He canceled the villains' quirks, then started to wrap as many as he could in his capture weapon, knocking them into each other and into the walls to disorient them. He couldn't see Viridian anymore, so hopefully the kid had enough sense to run away.

Izuku watched with wide eyes as Eraserhead fought the thugs. *Eraserhead!* He'd been trying to get Amplifier, mostly because she was the closest and the thugs' quirks were making it very hard for Izuku to stay ahead of them, but Eraserhead was even better. His quirk was so cool! Izuku could tell where he was looking just by seeing whose quirk could activate and whose couldn't. And then his hair! Did he have a secondary levitation quirk or was there something about his hair floating that was necessary for his quirk. Maybe it was built into his quirk to make sure that the hair didn't get in his eyes? If that were the case, if Erasehead was hanging upside-down and activated his quirk, would his hair float upwards like it was defying gravity, like it did when he was standing up, or would it obey the laws of physics and stay down so that it wouldn't risk getting in his eyes? What if…

Izuku was so caught up watching Eraserhead's quirk in action that he didn't notice that one of the thugs had gotten out of Eraserhead's line of sight and was looking straight at him. Izuku yelped as a tentacle wrapped around his ankle and started pulling him toward the grinning villain, who apparently had a squid quirk that gave him tentacles for hair.

Izuku hurriedly reached into his pocket and grabbed the box cutter he'd brought, fumbling as he expended the blade, then slashed at the tentacle. The villain screamed and let go as dark blood started pouring out of the wound. He growled at Izuku, who was holding his knife in front of him like a lifeline, then launched several tentacles at him at once. Izuku slashed and dodged as fast as he could, thankful that he was used to dodging explosions. He managed to cut quite a few of the tentacles that were attacking him, but the box cutter wasn't long enough to cut them off, not that Izuku really wanted to do that anyway. If he cut them off, would they grow back, or were they like an arm that once it was severed, was gone forever?

He *really* needed to stop getting distracted by interesting quirks because just as he was getting into a rhythm fighting the tentacle villain, another came up and hit him between the shoulder blades, throwing him to the ground and making him lose his hold on the box cutter. He looked up to see a villain with bulging muscles looming above him. This wasn't good.

Well, he didn't have any ranged weapons, but his best option was the dowels, probably, since he'd lost his knife. Izuku's heart sunk as he grabbed the wooden sticks from his hoodie pocket. They didn't look like they'd do a lot of good against a strength quirk. The man lunged for him again and Izuku dodged around him, then brought both sticks down on the back of the man's skull.

They broke.

"Uh-oh." Izuku gulped as the man slowly turned around, and glared at him. This was it. This was how he died. Wait...was he deflating?

"I thought I told you to get away, kid!"

Suddenly the man was wrapped in Eraserhead's scarf and pulled out of the way to reveal the hero himself staring down at Izuku with an exasperated expression. Ok, *this. This* was how he died.

"S-sorry, Eraserhead, sir. I j-just…"

A movement behind Eraserhead caught Izuku's eye and he realized that the tentacle villain hadn't been taken down yet and was going to grab Eraserhead! Izuku didn't even have time to think before he was rushing forward. His dowels may be broken, but they had splintered when they broke, which made them more like stakes. He didn't need to completely defeat the villain, he just needed to immobilize him for long enough for Eraserhead to erase his quirk.

He ducked beneath Eraserhead's arm and brought his stakes down on two of the tentacles, pinning them to the ground and making the villain cry out in pain. A few seconds later, the man was dragged toward him as his tentacles retracted back into his head. Izuku looked up behind him and could barely see a glint of red behind the gold goggles. Eraserhead waited a few seconds to make sure that the villain wasn't getting up, he must have passed out from the pain once his quirk was erased, then turned his glare toward Izuku.

"You must be Viridian."

Izuku winced, "I didn't ask for that article, I swear! I'm so sorry, Eraserhead, I was going to get Amplifier when these guys just started going crazy all of a sudden, but then one of them saw me, and then I…"

"Wait, did you say they went crazy all of a sudden?"

Izuku nodded and shrunk a little when he saw the scowl deepen on Eraserhead's face. He watched as Eraserhead knelt down and turned the tentacle villain over onto his back, then opened his mouth and took out his tongue.

"Hmm, black. Figures."

"Why is the color of his tongue important, Eraserhead?" Izuku asked hesitantly. "Couldn't it just be a part of his quirk? Don't some species of squid naturally have black tongues?"

Eraserhead looked up at him appraisingly, "True, but why don't you check one of the other villains. I doubt you can justify them *all* having black tongues naturally."

Izuku slowly made his way over to one of the unconscious villains and looked at his tongue. Sure enough, it was black, but, "The color's fading."

Eraserhead nodded, "It's the drug. It's called Trigger. You can tell

who's addicted because the tongue stays black. These guys must have just shot up the one time."

"But they didn't shoot up." Izuku said.

Eraserhead froze, "...what?"

Izuku fidgeted under his stare, "Um, I was watching them. They weren't using needles or anything before they went crazy. They weren't even smoking."

Eraserhead frowned, "Strange…"

"Um, Eraserhead, sir?" Izuku fidgeted again. "I'm, um, I'm sorry for getting in your way."

Eraserhead sighed, "Just call me Eraser, kid, and while I wish you'd hadn't gotten involved, you managed to hold your own. Stay out of fights, kid, you don't want to die."

Izuku waited for probably a moment too long before nodding and running away.

Izuku tucked himself back into bed after tending to his injuries for the night and thought about those weird thugs. Eraser said it was some kind of a drug, but how did they get exposed to it? Izuku shook his head. He should leave the investigation to Eraser and the police, he would just get in the way.

Right as he was falling asleep, he remembered what one of the thugs had said right before going crazy. *There are flies everywhere*. Weren't flies supposed to be asleep at night?

Huh, weird.

Weapons!

Chapter Summary

Izuku fine-tunes his weapon selection.

Chapter Notes

Some fanart!
One from Kichi ouma
And two from Rouge

Izuku had never actually been to a hardware store before. It probably had something to do with growing up without a father, but Mom had always just hired a handyman for anything that need to be fixed around the house and that guy always brought his own materials, so Izuku had never really had any reason to walk inside a store like this before, which was why he was currently standing frozen at the entrance, unsure of where to begin.

Some of the employees were starting to stare at him strangely, probably wondering why a kid in a middle school uniform was staring at their store like it was some kind of labyrinth that was going to eat him alive, so Izuku forced his feet to move and started aimlessly wandering while trying to look discreetly at the signs. It wasn't his fault the store was so big and intimidating!

Alright, he'd had a goal when he'd walked in here, hadn't he? Oh, right, pipe. After the fight with those drugged-up villains last week, he'd decided that he needed to...fine-tune his weapon selection. The dowels had worked great for the first few seconds, but they broke far too easily and just because Mom hadn't realized they were missing from the closet yet didn't mean he could just keep taking them until they were gone. What if Mom wanted to use them for another project!?

So, anyway, pipe hopefully wouldn't break as easily and it shouldn't be that hard to buy, right? But what section was he supposed to...plumbing sounded promising. Plumbing used pipes, didn't it? Izuku fought to not facepalm at his own stupidity, since he didn't need to give the staff any more reasons to question his sanity. Of course plumbing used pipes, he really was as stupid as Kacchan said, wasn't he?

He turned down the aisle and started looking around while desperately trying to pretend he knew what he was doing. Why were there so many pipes? And why were they all so long? He wasn't looking for a quarterstaff, he wanted something he could fit in his pocket! Finally he found some copper pipe that looked short enough to be promising. He picked up a piece and started passing it between his hands. It was light, but felt comfortable enough…

"Is there anything I can help you with?"

Izuku yelped and dropped the pipe, which made a series of loud clanging sounds as it bounced on the floor. Izuku felt his face heat up and turned to the employee who was looking at him apologetically. The kid was around his own age and had yellow hair that was almost as bright as the red apron of his store uniform.

"Sorry about that, dude." The employee said. "We're just supposed to offer help and expertise to the people who come in. Not that I actually have much expertise, I'm just a part-timer, but I could help you find someone who's an expert if you want."

"Um…" Izuku didn't think that any of the employees were experts in vigilantism, "No thanks, I'm j-just browsing."

"If you tell me what your project is, I could probably point you in the right direction." The kid offered.

"It's, um, it's just a hobby…" Izuku glanced down at the copper pipe, which was still sitting forgotten on the floor. It seemed too conspicuous, like it was a physical reminder of how useless he was. He not only didn't know what kind of pipe to buy but he'd also managed to loudly drop one within minutes of arriving at the store. He really was such an idiot, wasn't he?

The employee followed his gaze downward and smiled sheepishly, "Sorry, dude, normally I'd grab that and put it back for you, but," he chuckled awkwardly, "I'm not really supposed to handle any conductive materials."

For the first time, Izuku noticed the black lightning bolt pattern in the employee's hair, "Oh! You have an electricity quirk!"

"Yeah!" The employee smiled brightly. "My name's Kaminari, by the way."

"Nice to meet you!" Izuku leaned down and picked up the pipe, "It's

really smart of you to work here with your quirk, I'm sure you're learning all sorts of stuff about circuits and electricity!"

Kaminari's eyes widened, "Whoa, I hadn't even thought of that, dude! I just wanted to save some extra money for high school. I wonder if some of the guys in the electronics section would be willing to teach me."

"I'm sure they would." Izuku smiled. "Good luck!"

"Thanks dude!" Kaminari smiled. "And good luck on your project."

Izuku nodded and watched Kaminari leave before turning back to the pipe in his hands. He looked it over and frowned when he saw some small dents from where he'd dropped it. Copper was probably really good for traditional pipes, but it seemed like it was too soft for what Izuku had in mind. It would be really inconvenient to have to fix dents in his weapons every night.

Which put him back to square one. If copper wasn't going to cut it then what kinds of metal were there. There were a bunch of different plastics and PVC pipes, but those would probably have the same problems with breaking as the dowels did, so he didn't waste much time in that section. Finally, he saw a section with black pipes that said they were made of iron. He picked up a shorter piece and it seemed like it was heavy enough to pack a punch. He almost wanted to drop it to make sure it wouldn't dent, but the embarrassment had been bad enough the first time and that had been an accident!

He chose two identical pieces that were thick enough for him to hold comfortably and around 30 cm long. They'd take some getting used to, but the store didn't sell anything shorter than that in the iron, so they'd have to do. He put his pipes in his basket and started wandering toward a sign that said *tools* . He probably wouldn't buy anything from there, but it wouldn't hurt to look right?

Maybe they'd have a larger box cutter or something similar? The one he had was functional, but it hadn't been long enough to do any meaningful damage to that tentacle villain, so it'd be good to have something with a longer blade as a back-up. Looking at the box cutters, though, Izuku realized that they didn't really have a lot of variety when it came to blade length. It seemed like most of the differences between different models were just the width and the handle, which wasn't something that Izuku cared about.

Displayed right next to the box cutters, though, were a few utility

knives. Izuku hesitated before looking at them. Was he really ready to carry a knife? That seemed...more serious somehow. Like he was actually planning on hurting someone rather than just taking along a weapon in case of emergencies. But was a knife really all that different than a box cutter? They were both sharp and could do some damage, and the utility knife would be really useful…

He gave in and got a generic looking knife that was able to fold into its own handle so he wouldn't accidentally cut himself. It's not like he *had* to use it, right? It was just good to have. Between the knife and the pipes, though, Izuku was starting to get concerned about how he was going to carry everything. Sure, he had his hoodie pocket, but he'd already dropped his soup can three times while running and it had only been a week! Things just started to fall out from all the bouncing that running involved, so he should probably find a better solution.

He wandered around the tool aisle a little longer before he saw a section labeled *tool aprons* . Some looked like actual aprons, like the kind Kaminari had been wearing, but others were more like utility belts. They had loops that were probably meant for hammers, but Izuku could easily modify them to hold his pipes, and some pockets that would probably be perfect for his knife and can. He chose one made out of a dark green canvas-like material that would match well with the rest of his vigilante outfit and added it to his basket. It was a little pricey, but he hadn't bought any hero merch since...well, the point was that he had a little extra allowance saved up, so he could afford it.

Izuku made his way toward the checkout section, but stopped when one of the displays on the end of the aisles caught his attention. Slingshots. Well, it *would* be nice to have something capable of long range attacks…

He gave into temptation and read the packaging.

Slingshots, a fun, effective tool perfect for hunting and survival! Simply put your preferred ammunition (we recommend steel shot, marbles, or even smooth rocks) in the leather pouch and fire!

There were some packages of steel shot in the same display, which basically looked like metal marbles, but Izuku didn't grab any. Firing metal at someone sounded really serious, like firing a bullet, and he really wasn't a serious vigilante. Besides, other people were probably a lot better at slingshots than he was, and if they were planning on

using them for hunting or survival then they needed the professional ammunition much more than he did.

The cashier gave Izuku a weird look as he checked out, but he wasn't really paying attention. He should buy some marbles on the way home. They'd be perfect for his slingshot, plus, they'd solve a problem he'd been having finding rocks. Normally there was enough rubble from past hero fights that Izuku didn't have any trouble finding stuff to throw to get heroes' attention, but there had been a few times when it had taken a minute or two to find something to throw and the heroes had almost been too late. If he had marbles to throw, he wouldn't have to waste any time finding rocks! He wouldn't use his slingshot on the heroes, that'd be rude, but throwing them would work fine.

He chose a bigger toy store downtown, hoping they'd have a bigger variety of marbles. Thankfully, he didn't get nearly as many odd looks here, but it did feel weird to be here without making a bee-line for the hero collectables aisle. It took him a few minutes to find the marbles, but when he did, he was glad he'd come here rather than a smaller store.

There were a lot of marbles that were sold in small net bags that had ten or so normal marbles and a larger one, but what made Izuku grin was the large dispensers that sold marbles in bulk. He grabbed one of the canvas bags and looked at the different colors. Whoever was in charge of naming marble colors should help students come up with their hero names, because they were obviously having way too much fun with their job if the crazy names like *tsunami* or *wild tiger* were any indication. Izuku finally settled on a color called *enchanted forest* , which was a swirling mix of dark green and black, because it matched his vigilante outfit, and he bought about two pounds worth of marbles. Hopefully that would be enough to last him at least a couple of weeks, and there were a few pockets on his new tool belt that would be perfect for them!

For the first time since he'd met All Might, Izuku walked home smiling.

Looking Ahead

Chapter Summary

Izuku gets some practice with his new signature weapon.

Chapter Notes

Here's a picture of our baby Viridian, by Dead in a Ditch
Thanks for all the love, guys!

Izuku kept an eye on the clock and put all his books away five minutes before school ended. He saw some of the other students shooting him looks as the seconds ticked away and swallowed thickly. Hopefully he really *had* been getting faster since becoming a vigilante because he wasn't looking forward to what would happen to him if he didn't manage to get away in time.

The bell was like the gun at the beginning of a race and Izuku was out of the room before most of his classmates had even grabbed their bags. From there, it was just rushing to his locker, then out the door. The only one who could even hope to catch up to him at this point would be Kacchan, but Izuku hoped that his luck would hold and Kacchan would just go home like he'd been doing for the last few weeks. He didn't know why Kacchan seemed to be taking it easy on him, but maybe he'd finally realized that Izuku didn't have any hope of being better than him! Maybe if Izuku kept his head down, then Kacchan wouldn't see him as a threat and he'd keep leaving him alone! It was almost too much to hope for.

Mom was at work when he got home, so he sent her a quick text saying that he was going to go watch hero fights as he got changed, then grabbed his slingshot and a few dozen marbles and walked out the door. He needed to get used to his new weapon, considering he'd never actually used a slingshot before, and it might just be his poor self-esteem talking, but somehow he didn't think that the middle of a fight was the best time to practice his aim. Hence why he was going to do some target practice.

His first thought was to go to a park, but he didn't want to risk running into any of his classmates. They tried to destroy his things on the best of days, but if they were to see him practicing with a weapon...well, Izuku didn't want to have to go back to the hardware store so soon. Besides, it was probably better to practice someplace

secluded anyway because if people saw him practicing with a slingshot and then Viridian started using a slingshot shortly after, then that might be suspicious enough to lead the police to his doorstep and he'd rather not make Mom worry.

So, parks were out. He could go to the woods where he used to play with Kacchan, but he didn't really know if Kacchan still hung out there after school and he'd really rather stay *off* his radar right now, so he couldn't go to the woods. That, of course, left the beach.

Dagobah beach definitely wasn't as pretty as it had been a few decades ago, but that wasn't really the beach's fault, just like it wasn't Izuku's fault that he was useless. It was just kinda a fact of life. Izuku had been introduced to it a few years ago when he'd tagged along with Kacchan and his friends for an afternoon and they'd walked by it.

Hey, that's where you should live, Deku! You'd feel right at home with all the other trash.

He'd kinda been right. Yeah, the beach didn't smell the best since the weird fishy smell of the ocean mixed with the rotting piles of garbage, but the ventilation was okay, so it only took a few minutes for Izuku to stop noticing the smell, but it was secluded and peaceful. There wasn't anyone here to beat him up or tell him to kill himself, it was just him and all the other useless garbage that people had thrown away. It was nice.

Izuku dug through the piles before he found a piece of sheet metal that wasn't too rusted and set it up against an old washing machine, then stood a few meters back and got out his slingshot. It took him a few tries to figure out how to pinch the marble through the pouch so that he didn't drop it, but soon enough he'd lined up his shot and aimed for the dead center of his makeshift target.

Izuku took a deep breath and let go. Now, if he was right, the marble should make a sound when it hit the target and...well, either his target didn't actually make a sound or he'd missed. Of those two possibilities, Izuku had to admit that the latter was much more likely. He looked in the sand under the target, but couldn't see the marble, so his aim was obviously a bit off. He searched for a full two or three minutes before giving up and searching for a tarp to put behind his target instead. He didn't want the trash piles to eat all his marbles before he even had the chance to practice!

Eventually, Izuku found a tarp that didn't have too many holes in it and draped it between his target and the washing machine, then put down another tarp on the sand underneath it. Okay, now as long as he managed to shoot in the general area of the target, he shouldn't lose his marbles. Not that he hadn't obviously lost his marbles a long time ago, considering he'd chosen to become a vigilante, so...dumb joke, he really should stop trying to be funny.

He still didn't hit the target on his next shot, but the tarp worked well and caught the marble so he could reuse it. His arms were starting to get sore by the time he finally heard the tell-tale metallic *ding* as he hit the target for the first time and Izuku couldn't help himself as he whooped in excitement and started jumping around, startling a few seagulls that had been trying to find something to eat among the garbage. He flushed with embarrassment before he realized that no one would be annoyed at him for yelling because no one was around, and then he smiled. He'd done it! He'd actually hit the target!

By the time the sun was setting, Izuku was able to reliably hit his target and the sheet metal was covered in small dents. He was down a few marbles from when his shots had gone wildly off course, but overall, Izuku thought that the afternoon had been a success. He felt all warm and happy, and if he didn't know any better, he'd almost say that he was *proud* .

If this was how Kacchan felt every time someone told him how awesome he was, then Izuku could see the appeal.

Katsuki didn't know how he was supposed to feel.

He really shouldn't pity Deku. And he definitely shouldn't feel *guilty* for how he treated him. The quirkless fucker deserved it for being so weak, right? So then why did Katsuki feel like he was going to throw up every time one of those extras at school told him to jump off a roof? *He'd* told Deku to jump off a roof! It should be any different if someone else was saying it!

But...was Deku really as weak as all that? When all those heroes had been sitting on their asses, Deku had been the only one to run forward to try and save him. Did that mean that Deku was strong? Or did it mean that Katsuki was weak? Was he even weaker than Deku if he had to rely on a quirkless weaking like that to save him?

No! He *had* to be strong! He had a quirk that let him make fucking *exposions*! He was going to be the number one hero and there was no

way Deku or any of those other useless extras were going to stand in his way!

He was going to be even better than All Might, but would All Might treat Deku like he had? But, all his teachers knew that he was going to be a hero, and they would have told him if he wasn't acting like a hero, right? They were always going on about how Katsuki had what it took, and heroes were better than everyone else, so he was better than Deku right?

So why did he feel so bad? At first he'd just thought that sludge must have just been making him nauseous or something because there was no logical reason for him to feel this way. He was strong, he obviously wasn't doing anything wrong!

But...what if he was?

Katsuki threw off the covers and went to his computer. He obviously wasn't going to be getting any sleep anytime soon, he might as well do something productive. He found himself looking up how to be a hero. There were obviously the articles that he'd read a million times before about how to apply to hero schools, what it took to get a license and all that crap, but that wasn't what Katsuki was really looking for. He frowned before typing something else into the search bar.

How is a hero supposed to act?

He clicked on a video of All Might and rushed to put the headphones in so that he wouldn't wake up his dad. The hag slept like a rock, so he wasn't worried about her. The interview was a few years old, and All Might grinned as he sat across from the host, the couch sagging under the weight of his massive muscles. The host looked like a baby in comparison, but it was always possible they were smaller than normal because of their quirk.

"So All Might, I know that a lot of kids dream of being a hero like you." The host began.

"As well they should!" All Might laughed. "It's a difficult career, and it's definitely not for everyone, but if you have what it takes, it is extremely rewarding!"

"Exactly! And we all know how physically grueling heroism can be, but what about emotionally? All Might, what do you think it takes to be a hero at heart, even for those that will never get a license?"

“Hmm, that’s a good question.” All Might paused for a moment as if he was thinking. “I think a hero is someone who gives others hope. They lift others up at every opportunity and encourage them to be better! The people we heroes defend will almost always be weaker than we are, if this wasn’t the case then everyone would defend themselves and heroes wouldn’t be the essential career they are today, but it is our responsibility to make sure they find their inner strength and become the best people they can be.”

“What about heroes like Endeavor, who have been known to look down on their fans?”

“I can’t speak for every hero, of course, but I personally wouldn’t have gotten to the number one spot if I spent my time and energy insulting my fans.” Katsuki froze as All Might turned to look at the camera and it felt like he was staring right into his soul. “A hero isn’t someone who insults others. A hero is kind and comforts people in the midst of disasters. My mentor once taught me that if a person is in need of saving, that means they are going through the worst day of their lives. If you insult them rather than saving them with a smile, are you really, truly saving them? Or are you making the worst day of their lives even worse? That’s why I believe a hero should always strive to be kind, make others happy, and give them hope. That is what truly makes a hero!”

The interviewer laughed and moved onto the next question as the studio audience applauded the nation’s symbol of peace and Katsuki was left to stare at his reflection in the screen as it went dark as the next video in the playlist loaded.

Crap.

Parkour

Chapter Summary

Did anyone ask for some good old-fashioned Dadzawa?

Shouta had never really understood the appeal of bars. He supposed that Yamada or Shirakumo probably would have dragged him along when they got old enough if they had actually started their own agency like they'd always planned, but...well, Shouta just thought it was irrational to dull his senses with alcohol and loud music when there was work that needed to be done.

Which was what brought him here, overlooking the bar district while partiers enjoyed the nightlife. Amplifier had only been out sick for a day or two, but since the last trigger incident had been in her territory, Shouta had asked for her permission to stick around and look for any leads. He'd been hanging around for almost two weeks and, while he'd managed to find a few small dealers, there hadn't been another major incident.

Shouta heard Amplifier's voice echoing from a few streets over and he sighed and started running in that direction. It was probably nothing she couldn't handle, but he may as well lend a hand as long as he didn't have any of his own leads to chase. As he got closer to the fight, however, he almost stopped in shock. He wasn't the only one who had shown up to the fight.

Crouching on the rooftop, eyes glued to the fight below, was Viridian. The kid had a small notebook out and Shouta wondered how he could even see what he was writing in the sparse light. It couldn't be good for his eyes. He could see the kid's lips moving as well, so he was probably muttering something, but the words were drowned out by the sound of aplifier's quirk.

The kid had also gotten some more gear, apparently, which alleviated some of Shouta's worries that Viridian wouldn't be able to defend himself. He had added a belt to his costume, which held his tin can and a couple...sticks? Hopefully they were more durable than the ones he'd tried to use last time Shouta had run into him. There was also a slingshot hanging from one of the loops, and Shouta nodded in satisfaction. At least the kid had enough sense to cover his long range defenses.

He decided he'd watched long enough, he should get Viridian to give him an overview of the situation, since he'd most likely been the one to lead Amplifier to the fight in the first place, "Does she need any help?"

Viridian yelped and clutched his notebook to his chest as he turned around with panic in his eyes. Shouta snorted, "Seriously kid? I would think a vigilante would have more situational awareness. How do you manage to sniff out crimes as well as you do if you couldn't even tell I was behind you?"

"W-well, E-eraserhead sir, um, you are one of the most stealth based heroes out there, and Amplifier's quirk is based on volume, so you probably used her quirk to cover your own approach, unless that's not what you were trying to do, but then again, I guess I was kinda distracted watching the fight and…"

Shouta rolled his eyes as he went to the edge of the roof and looked down. Amplifier had stopped yelling and seemed to be comforting the victim as a group of thugs struggled weakly on the ground, "You lead her to this one?"

Viridian nodded frantically, "The guys were drunk and I didn't want them to hurt that girl because she was alone and I really didn't like the way they were looking at her and…"

Shouta cut off the kid's rambling, "Good work kid."

Viridian gave him a bright smile, like Shouta had congratulated him on saving the world rather than just one girl, and practically started vibrating with excitement, "T-thank you, Eraserhead sir!"

"Like I said before, kid, it's just Eraser."

"Oh," Viridian's face fell and Shouta hoped he was imagining the glimmer of tears behind his goggles, "I-i'm sorry, E-eraser…"

"It's not a big deal, kid." Seriously, he hadn't been expecting Viridian to be so emotional. What was up with the kid? He hadn't actually done anything wrong. Well, he hadn't if Shouta ignored the whole vigilante thing, but there was nothing actually wrong with calling him by his full hero name. So why had a simple correction been enough to move the kid to tears?

Maybe he should change the subject, "So, what were you writing?"

Viridian quickly hid the notebook in one of the pouches on his belt, “Oh, um, nothing?”

Shouta shot him an unimpressed look, “Really, kid? If you’re going to lie, at least come up with a better excuse. Let me see.”

“It’s really nothing!”

Shouta raised one eyebrow.

“It’s just...my notes are silly and kinda embarrassing.” Viridian finally muttered. “It’s just some thoughts on the fight so I can figure out what Amplifier was doing and maybe do something similar in the future. I mean, it’s nothing special, I know it’s kinda creepy.”

Shouta raised an eyebrow at him, “You’re learning by example, that’s smart. I wish my students had half that drive.”

Viridian’s head snapped up and he looked at Shouta with wide eyes, “You’re a teacher?”

Shouta snorted, “Yeah, I expel brats at UA. Maybe if you actually stay off the streets, you could actually be in my class in a few years.”

Viridan looked at the ground and started fidgeting with the sleeves of his hoodie, “Do you teach the hero course students?”

“Yes…” Shouta looked at Viridian curiously. “I teach the first years.”

“Then I won’t be in your class.” Viridian shook his head. “I...I can’t be a hero.”

“Why…?”

“Bye, Eraser! See you later!”

Viridian started scrambling down the fire escape even though the roofs were close enough together that it’d be easier for him to parkour away. Shouta thought fast and wrapped his capture weapon around one of Viridan’s wrists. He stopped and Shouta could feel how hard he was trembling just from the way his capture weapon moved.

“Kid, do you not know parkour?”

“P-parkour?”

Shouta rolled his eyes, “Yes kid, parkour. You know, running across

rooftops without dying? It's pretty essential in this line of work."

"Um," Viridan had started fidgeting with his sleeves again as soon as Shouta released the tension on his weapon, "I don't...no? I mean, I guess I've considered it, but I've never really learned, so...no?"

Shouta sighed, "Follow me."

He made his way down the fire escape, waving to Amplifier as they passed her and was pleased when he saw that Viridian had actually started following him. He really should be working on finding leads, but it didn't look like anyone else was going to put in the work to make sure this kid didn't die.

It didn't take them long to reach a skate park a few streets over. It was practically abandoned at this time of night except for a few homeless people and drug dealers, but as long as they left each other alone, Shouta wasn't going to worry about them.

He turned around, forcing Viridian to stop quickly to avoid running into him, "Alright, first thing's first, you have to learn how to fall."

"Um...I thought the point of parkour was to not fall…"

Shouta gave him a deadpan glare, "No. the point is to not get *hurt* when you fall. You're always going to fall, especially early on, and that's why you have to start small." He gestured to the park. "Places like this are a good place to practice early on because you don't have that far to fall. Tonight, though, I'm just gonna teach you how to roll."

"You...you're going to *teach* me?!"

Shouta rolled his eyes, "Yes, kid, I'm going to teach you. Why else would I have led you here?"

Viridian shrugged, "Catch me?"

Shouta sighed again, "Not tonight kid. Little known fact is that we heroes, especially underground heroes like me, often prefer to work *with* vigilantes than against them. If you get overly violent or turn to villainy, that'll change pretty quickly, but for right now, we're good. Just don't tell the cops, they're a little more uptight about the whole thing. Alright, now like I said, you're always going to fall. Rolling is a good way to make sure that your momentum gets dissipated gradually so that it doesn't hurt your body. You don't get hurt by moving fast, you get hurt when you suddenly stop moving."

That made Viridian chuckle, which Shouta decided to count as a win considering he'd made the kid cry earlier, "We're not going to start from on top of a wall, you're not ready for that right now, but just watch me."

Viridian cried out as Shouta dove toward the ground, tucking his arm under him so that he rolled over his shoulder and landed back on his feet, "That's a basic roll. Now let's go slow and I'll talk you through it."

Shouta spent the next hour coaching the kid on some of the basic movements of parkour and giving him some exercises that would give him a decent foundation. The kid was obviously unused to the movement, but he was a pretty fast learner, all things considered. Occasionally, Viridian would stop to adjust the tools on his belt so that the weight didn't get in his way, or he would take out his notebook and write something down before putting it away again. Shouta couldn't help but be a little curious about it, even though the kid had told him it was nothing.

"You should take notes on villains too." Shouta said as Viridian reached for his notebook yet again after Shouta had taught him a new movement. "Taking notes on heroes is good, so you can learn what they do, but knowing what villains do is arguably more important."

"Hmm," Viridian finished writing what he was going to and put the notebook back in his belt, "but you don't fight repeat villains all the time, and everyone has unique quirks, why does it matter how a particular villain fights?"

"Think about it, kid." Shouta sat down on one of the low walls and gestured for Viridian to sit next to him. "Yeah, you might not ever come across that exact quirk again, but take Present Mic and Amplifier. Their quirks might not be identical, but…"

"But they're similar enough that what works against one might work against another…" Viridian said slowly. "So the more I understand different villain's quirks, the more strategies I'll be prepared to fight with!"

Shouta nodded. At least the problem child was quick on his feet. Not that Shouta didn't already know that, considering that he'd won his first fight with literal garbage. "You'll also get better at looking for weaknesses. Right now, because you're trying to emulate heroes, you're automatically looking for people's strengths, when what you

really need to be focusing on is their weaknesses."

Viridian had pulled his notebook back out and was apparently taking notes on everything Shouta said. Now he *really* wished the kid was one of his students. Shouta glanced at his watch and stood.

"You'd probably better get to bed, kid, don't you have school tomorrow?"

Whatever eagerness Viridian had been showing only moments before disappeared as the kid seemed to shrink in on himself, almost like he was trying to make himself a smaller target. Why…?

"Goodnight, Eraser. Thank you for your help! Sorry for bothering you!"

He almost stopped the kid from running off again, but by the time he realized Viridian was going to run, he was already around the corner. Damn, he knew the kid was fast, but seriously? He sighed and made his way back to the rooftops. He'd wasted some time, but he couldn't bring himself to regret it.

After all, an extra set of boots on the ground couldn't hurt, right?

Don't Die

Chapter Summary

Viridian helps Eraser with a fight.

How did Shouta get himself into these situations?

There had been a trigger enhanced next level villain attack earlier that day, so he was doing the rounds, shaking down any trigger dealers he knew to try to get some leads while the police tried to figure out the poor guy's identity. The first few had been just what he expected, but this last one had shot up as soon as Aizawa started asking questions and now he was trying to figure out how to lead this guy away from populated areas. And he was a mutant type, so there was that.

The dealer had a crab-type heteromorphic quirk, which hadn't been a big deal when his skin was just a bit more durable and there was an extra pair of arms, but now his skin had hardened into an armored shell and his hands and turned into razor sharp claws and Shouta couldn't erase it. So far, he'd just been dodging all of the villain's attacks and waiting for the trigger to wear off. This batch must have been more potent than most, however, because they'd been doing this dance for ten minutes now and the guy wasn't even out of breath.

Sneak attacks were really much more effective, not that he couldn't do drawn out battles, but he didn't prefer them for various reasons. One of those reasons being that the longer he fought, the more likely it was for him to blink and miss something important, such as one of the claws reaching out and tangling itself in his capture weapon. Within seconds, the crab villain had managed to spin his claws in such a way that Shouta was tangled in his own weapon and his hands were pinned to his side. Dang it. If he made it out of this alive, Tsukauchi would never let him live this down.

The villain was grinning down at him as he gradually tightened the weapon until Shouta couldn't breathe, then tightened it some more. Suddenly, Shouta felt something whiz by the top of his head and hit the villain right between his eyes, making him stagger back and loosen his hold on the capture weapon. Shouta gasped for air and tried to yank his capture weapon back, but the villain had already recovered. Swearing, he reached for his knife to cut the weapon right as his opponent moved to tighten the noose again.

Suddenly, the villain cried out in pain and clutched his eyes. Shouta didn't waste any time cutting the weapon free of the villain's claws and stepping back to catch his breath. Now that he wasn't about to die, he glanced to the side to see who had helped him, only to see Viridian trembling beside him with his slingshot still at the ready. The kid's expression was frozen halfway between determined and terrified, a fact that Shouta probably would have laughed at in any other situation.

"Get out of here, kid!" Shouta yelled. "This guy's on trigger, he's out of your league."

Izuku knew that he should listen to Eraserhead. This guy was...a lot bigger than most of the small fry he'd managed to take down alone. Even Eraser was having trouble with him! But that was exactly why Izuku knew that he couldn't leave! If he left, even if it was to go get another hero, then there was a chance that Eraserhead would be dead by the time he came back and he wouldn't be able to live with himself if that happened. Besides, it's not like he was taking a huge risk fighting this guy. Eraserhead would be able to save so many more people than Izuku could if he survived this fight, and he was a hero that would still be able to fight his way out even if the villain killed Izuku.

That was why Izuku didn't hesitate to run forward, ignoring Eraser's yells behind him as he switched his slingshot out for his pipes. If only one of them could survive this fight, Izuku had to make sure it was Eraserhead and not a useless Deku like him. Izuku just hoped he could distract the villain long enough for Eraserhead to beat him.

He'd been aiming for the villain's eyes to get him to let go of his victim earlier, but Izuku's aim wasn't very good yet and it had taken a few tries, which was why he'd decided to switch to close range. Besides, he didn't think his marbles would do much good against the villain's shell anyway. He didn't know if his pipes would do much better, but at least they were easier to aim.

He tried to review what he knew about crabs as he got closer, but he couldn't think of any obvious weaknesses, except for maybe the joints. Even if the guy's skin was hardened into a shell, there had to be breaks in it so he could move around and Izuku had had enough action figures break at the joints that he knew how fragile they were.

He brought both pipes down on the bend of one of the villain's arms, hoping he was right, and had to duck quickly as one of the claws was

aimed toward his head. He rolled just like Eraser had taught him to and got to his feet to see the arm he'd targeted hanging a little more limply.

"Eraser! Aim for the joints!"

He heard Eraser yelling something at him again, but focused on running forward again and hitting one of the villain's knees. If he could just decrease his mobility…

He rolled away as the villain stumbled and he looked to see that Eraser had wrapped his capture weapon around one of the villain's arms and used that as leverage to singshot himself and kick at the villain's hips. So cool! The only problem was that even though the villain had collapsed onto the ground from the combined force of both their attacks, he still had a solid hold on Eraser's capture weapon and was trying to tangle it around Eraser like he had been when Izuku arrived.

Izuku dodged another hit from the villain's flailing arms and switched to his knife. He was still nervous to really use it, but it's not like he was actually using it on the villain, right? He just needed to cut the capture weapon so that Eraser could get free. He unfolded the blade and ran forward, trying to slash the cloth as close to the villain's arm as he could. It took a few passes, since the cloth must be mixed with some kind of metal, but Eraserhead had gotten out his own knife and together they managed to get him free. Izuku hesitated only a moment before tossing his pipes to Eraser, who caught them with a confused look on his face.

"Your capture weapon isn't a good match for this villain. It's only gonna keep getting tangled." Izuku's eyes widened as he realized he'd just told a hero what to do. "Not that you have to use my pipes! I mean, you obviously know a lot better than I do and you've been doing this a lot longer and…"

"Viridian, look out!"

Izuku only caught a glimpse of the freaked-out look on Eraser's face before the blunt part of one of the villain's claws hit him in the stomach and threw him hard against one of the walls. Good thing he'd already given Eraser his pipes.

Shouta froze as he watched Viridian, a literal child, get batted against the wall and pass out. Or hopefully pass out. The kid was slumped over and had gone limp, but Shouta didn't know what he'd do if the

kid was…

He turned back to the villain with rage in his eyes, clutching the pipes Viridian had given him like a lifeline as he practically growled, “Big mistake.”

He ducked and dodged every attack the villain threw at him and used the pipes to bludgeon the joints. He wasn’t used to fighting with them, but he had to admit that they were much more effective than his capture weapon against this particular villain. Within minutes, the villain collapsed in a pile on the floor and started to shrink down as the trigger finally wore off. Shouta texted Tsukauchi to come pick the villain up and ran to help Viridian.

“Kid, can you hear me?”

Viridian groaned, “Eraserhead? Are you ok? Did you win?”

Shouta looked at the kid in shock, “Am I ok? Am *I* ok? You just got thrown against a wall, problem child! You’re lucky you didn’t die!”

Viridian shrugged as he got to his feet. *Shrugged!*

“Well, you beat the villain, didn’t you? So it was worth it.”

Shouta opened and closed his mouth a few times as he tried to figure out how to respond to that, “No! Kid, that was stupid and reckless! Don’t do that again.”

“…ok.”

He didn’t like the fact that he could tell Viridian was lying. If the kid kept putting himself in dangerous situations like this, which it sounded like he was going to, then he was going to get himself killed. Shouta needed to make sure that didn’t happen. And he needed to make sure the kid was actually okay after that blow.

“Come on, kid. I’m taking you to the hospital.”

The kid shook his head frantically, only to stop with a wince, which meant that the kid most likely had a headache and probably a concussion as well. All the more reason to get him medical attention. He grabbed onto the Viridian’s arm, careful not to hold on too tight in case the kid was bruised there.

“No offense, problem child, but I’m not giving you a choice. You need

a doctor.”

Viridian frowned, but stopped fighting and let Shouta start leading him down the street toward the nearest hospital. Shouta sighed with relief and tore his eyes away from the kid so he could see where they were going, which was why he missed the way the kid’s arm wound up for a punch.

The hit was sloppy, but Viridian actually managed to punch him right on the nose with a surprising amount of strength. Instinctively, his hands went to his face as his eyes watered and by the time he’d recovered enough to see again, Viridian had already disappeared.

“Damn problem child.” Shouta muttered as he made his way back to the downed villain. “What am I gonna do?”

Anxiety

Chapter Summary

Life goes on even if you're an injured vigilante.

Izuku had to pause in the middle of putting on his school uniform as the weight of what he'd done last night came crashing down on him. He'd been too tired last night to really process what had happened, but now the panic was back with a vengeance.

He'd punched Eraserhead!

Eraser had to be so mad at him. He'd just been trying to get Izuku to a hospital but then he'd panicked about what would happen if they figured out who he was, which meant that *Mom* would figure out what he'd been doing, and she would be so worried and scared and he really didn't want to do that to her, so he had to get away, but if he wanted to get away, he had to make Eraser let go of him, and he really wasn't thinking that clearly, and the first stupid thought he'd had was to punch a hero in the nose! Whatever respect Eraser had for him was gone, not that he could've gained that much considering that Izuku was a quirkless middle schooler who couldn't even aim his slingshot correctly, but that didn't matter because it was gone now and he was never going to get it back.

Good work, Deku, his inner Kacchan said, *you managed to fuck things up even worse than you ususally do.*

He didn't want to have to face Eraserhead again. Maybe he would die before he had to see him! That would be good. Maybe he would go out tonight and there would be some villain attack, maybe even another trigger villain, and Izuku would just step in instead of getting a hero and then it'd all be over quickly and he wouldn't have to deal with Eraser's anger, or Amplifier's disappointment, or Mom's worry, or Kachan's…

Izuku shook his head forcefully, he wasn't supposed to be thinking things like that. Besides, with his luck that probably wouldn't work anyway. Even if everything went well and he died, the fact that he didn't go get a hero for such a big villain would be suspicious, and then what would happen if they realized he'd *wanted* to...and then they'd look into Kacchan and he wouldn't be able to go to UA and it would all be Izuku's fault!

Izuku shook his head again and winced as he realized he had a headache he'd been ignoring. His ribs hurt more than his head did, though. He knew he probably had a little concussion, but it was nothing compared to that time Kaachan had pushed him off the slide on accident and he'd hit his head, so Izuku wasn't that worried. He shrugged off his shirt so he could put some cream on his ribs, tensing as the cold cream hit his skin. After that, he finished getting dressed and grabbed his backpack. He didn't want to be late for school.

Katsuki tuned out the extras that surrounded him as he ate his lunch. The old hag had packed the extra-spicy curry today, so he knew it was gonna be good.

"Look guys, it's Deku." One of the extras at another table called out and sure enough, Katsuki looked up to see Deku walking into the cafeteria with his shoulders hunched. The extras sitting at his table looked to see how he'd react, but he just scoffed and turned back to his lunch. Heroes didn't pick on their classmates, no matter how much they deserved it, and he was going to be the best hero!

"What's up, Deku?" The extra with extendable fingers asked. "Still alive?"

A small group of their classmates had surrounded Deku by this point and even some of the extras at Katsuki's table had gotten up to go join the fun. The extras were grinning and laughing like Fingers had just made the funniest joke on earth, but Deku himself was just staring silently at the ground.

"Why so quiet?" Another extra, this one with boulders for hair, asked. "Finally realize that no one cares what you have to say?"

Well, that might be *true* , but it probably wasn't very nice to say. Katsuki knew he was acting like a bit of a hypocrite. It wasn't like anything they were saying to Deku was new. Katsuki himself had always prided himself on being especially creative with his insults, after all, so in comparison, these extra's insults were boring and almost as plain as Deku's face. So it wasn't like the extras were saying anything that Deku hadn't heard before, or anything they hadn't heard Katsuki himself say.

But Katsuki wanted to be like All Might, which meant that he wasn't going to waste his time insulting people anymore! His classmates didn't have any hope of being heroes, though, so it was ok for them to insult Deku, right? Or was that wrong too? What would All Might do

if he was here?

Boulders had taken that moment to punch Deku in the ribs, making him gasp in pain. Hmm, either Boulders had gotten stronger or Deku had already had sore ribs. Had some of the other extras given him a beating when Katsuki wasn't looking? Thinking back, Deku had been walking kinda funny all day, like he was sore or something, and goodness knows that the nerd wasn't athletic enough to be sore from exercise.

"Hey, save some of that air for those who deserve it, nerd!"

Katsuki looked to some of the teachers who were eating at a small table in the corner. They had to know what was happening, it wasn't like those extras were being quiet. So why weren't they doing anything? Why hadn't they *ever* done anything? Wasn't it their job to keep kids from getting hurt or something?

What would All Might do if he were one of them. He'd probably tell those kids off for being *unheroic.* But the teachers weren't doing that. Katsuki watched them as the extras kept insulting Deku and one of them even glanced over and chuckled before turning back to his lunch. That...well it was normal, but it didn't seem *right* . Why wasn't anyone doing anything?

Why wasn't *he* doing anything?

The thought made Katsuki stop. Was he supposed to step in? All Might probably would, but that brought him back to the whole hypocrisy thing. What gave him the right to step in and protect Deku when just a month ago, he was one of the ones...well, maybe *attacking him* wasn't the right way to phrase it, but still. Even if he were to step in, Deku probably wouldn't trust him at all, and all the useless extras might think that Katsuki was admitting that Deku was better than him, or that he was weak…

The curry turned to sawdust in his mouth, spicy sawdust, but still flavorless as Deku silently picked the remains of his lunch off the floor and threw them away after one of the extras had knocked it out of his hands. He didn't really know how to describe what he was feeling, he just knew he didn't like it. He was the best, he'd always been the best, and if there was anything the best *wasn't,* it was a coward, so this annoying feeling couldn't be fear.

Could it?

Izuku walked through the hardware store much more confidently this time, now that he actually knew what he was looking for and how to find it. He should have just picked his pipes up when he left last night's fight, but even though the concussion hadn't been that bad, both it and the pain from being thrown into a wall had made it difficult to focus on anything besides getting away so Eraser wouldn't tell Mom about his vigilantism.

Which meant that the pipes had been left to rot among all the other garbage in that alley and Izuku needed to replace them. He couldn't bring himself to regret giving them to Eraser though. If he'd kept using his capture weapon, there was a good chance he would have gotten hurt, so the pipes were obviously the better option. Not that Eraser's capture weapon was bad! It was actually really cool and worked against a lot of villains so that he didn't hurt them any more than he had to and…

Oh, right, Izuku was here to get pipes.

He should probably buy a few backups to keep in his closet too, just in case he ever lost them again. Yeah, that'd be a good idea. And zip-ties. It wasn't a big problem when he helped heroes, but Izuku had been having problems restraining the small-time villains he was able to take down on his own. Most of the time he was able to find some kind of rope or cloth to tie them up with, but it would be nice to not have to worry about that anymore.

Izuku was extremely proud of himself when he managed to get to the checkout stand with only the items on his list, unlike last time when he'd ended up with a lot of other stuff too. To his surprise, his casier was the kid with the electricity quirk he'd talked to last time. What was his name again? Oh, right, Kaminari!

"Hey dude!" Kaminari smiled as Izuku put his basket down on the counter, "Nice to see you back here!"

"T-thanks." Izuku said. "Um, how is your electricity training coming? Were any of the electricians willing to teach you?"

Kaminari nodded eagerly, "One of them actually offered to make a temporary apprentice! I'm learning all about the basics and how circuits work and stuff. I didn't even realize that my quirk might not be effective against a flying villain, isn't that insane?"

Izuku nodded. That was one of the main limitations of electric heroes, they couldn't actually electrocute something that wasn't grounded.

But the way that he talked about villains specifically, “Are you going to be a hero?”

Kaminari shrugged and smiled, “That’s the hope. My quirk is flashy enough for it, so it’s just a question of if I’m actually smart enough to get in. Cash or card?”

Izuku smiled encouragingly as he handed over a handful of cash, “You can do it!”

Kaminari put the pipes and zipties in a plastic bag, “Thanks, dude! I’m sure gonna try! Hey, what are you making anyway? You were buying pipes last time.”

Izuku didn’t know how to respond to that, so he just shrugged.

Kaminari laughed, “Alright, keep your secrets dude. Good luck with whatever it is though.”

Izuku nodded, “And good luck with your apprenticeship! See you later!”

Izuku had never really been lucky, in fact he’d been mostly the opposite, but he was grateful for Kaminari’s words anyway. He’d run into Eraserhead eventually, and then he’d need all the luck he could get.

Analysis

Chapter Summary

Izuku runs into Eraserhead again a little sooner than he'd hoped

Chapter Notes

TV Tropes Page

Izuku hesitated before grabbing a marble out of the pouch on his belt. Why couldn't Amplifier be closer? Or even Rock Lock? He could have dealt with that. But why did it have to be Eraserhead? Izuku instinctively looked back even though the mugging he'd come across was a few streets away. Maybe he'd be able to handle it on his own...he could just go back, but there were five big guys and the victim didn't look like he'd be able to run away fast enough if Izuku were to die, which was likely considering he was still injured from his fight last night.

Izuku groaned in frustration, then threw the marble, which bounced off Eraserhead's back. Izuku's jaw dropped at his reflexes as Eraser whipped around and immediately grabbed the marble out of the air before it could hit the ground. He looked at it for a second in confusion before looking around. Izuku winced as he saw the ugly bruise spreading across Eraser's nose. He was such a bad person.

He froze as Eraser's eyes zeroed in on him, but his expression was strange. Eraser should be really angry and Izuku had been expecting a scowl like Kacchan had when Izuku annoyed him, but instead Eraser looked...relieved? It must just be because Izuku couldn't see his eyes, or he was just be terrible at reading facial expressions because there was no way that someone would be *relieved* to see the person who punched them in the nose! Eraser must just be hiding his anger.

Izuku smiled apologetically and started running. This was so embarrassing! Eraser probably wanted nothing to do with him and yet here he was asking for help from someone who he'd hurt. He didn't deserve Eraser's help. He'd just have to stick around and help with the fight so Eraser didn't have to work as hard! He couldn't just punch him in the face, then expect him to do all the work.

When they reached the mugging, Izuku ran right in, Eraserhead close behind him. The thugs were big, and at least two of them seemed to

have minor strength enhancement quirks, so Izuku should try to handle the others first. He rushed toward a skinny guy who was manifesting short blades from his skin. He would probably get cut a few times, but it was better he got hurt than Eraserhead. He probably deserved some extra pain after what he'd done.

Suddenly, the blades disappeared and Izuku glanced behind him to see Eraser glaring at *his* villain, "Viridian! You have a slingshot for a reason! Don't just run in recklessly!"

Izuku's eyes widened. He was right, he'd bought his slingshot so he didn't have to get close to villains if he didn't have to. And Eraserhead had had to cancel the knife villain's quirk to remind him of that, which meant that he wasn't able to worry about the others, which meant that Izuku had messed everything up again. Nice going, Deku. He quickly got out of the knife quirk user's range and jumped on top of the dumpster so he had a good view of the fight, then got out his slingshot and a handful of marbles.

He started pelting all five thugs with as many marbles as he could without hitting Eraserhead. Mostly he just distracted the villains long enough for Eraserhead to get a hit in, which honestly worked pretty well. It had only been a few minutes and Eraser had already managed to put two thugs out of commission! He was so cool!

Eraserhead was focused on fighting the two strength quirk villains and Izuku was focused on creating an opening for Eraser, so neither of them noticed one of the thugs literally melt into the shadows and make his way to the dumpster Izuku was standing on. Izuku screamed and almost lost his balance when a creepy smile suddenly popped into exitence in front of him, but before he could fall, the shadow villain grabbed his arm and flipped Izuku over his shoulder, slamming him hard onto the concrete.

Izuku grit his teeth as he forced himself to roll to his feet like Eraser had taught him and grabbed his pipes. He lowered himself into a battle stance as he tried to keep his eye on the villain, but he simply melted into the shadows again, then popped up behind Izuku and kicked him in the back. This fight *really* wasn't good for his still-bruised ribs.

Izuku ran through what he knew about the guy's quirk. Ok, so he could blend in with shadows. Was he using it as a disguise to make himself invisible, or was he actually changing the shape of his body? Maybe he was using it to teleport? As the villain started to disappear

again, Izuku ran forward and grabbed at the air. There! The villain was still there, he simply became invisible in darkness!

Izuku grinned and closed his eyes. If he couldn't rely on his sense of sight, he'd just have to use his other senses. Kacchan's explosions could get bright enough to temporarily blind someone and he'd gone through a phase in elementary school where his favorite past-time was to blind Izuku during recess, then have his lackeys attack him while he couldn't see. Izuku had had to learn to dodge based only on sound and movement and eventually he'd gotten good enough at it that Kacchan decided the game was too boring and he'd stopped. Izuku just hoped he wasn't too out of practice.

Izuku took a deep breath. He could hear Eraser fighting those other two villains a little farther away, but let that fade into the background. He only needed to worry about the sounds closest to him. There was a footstep off to his left and a slight breeze by his shoulder, so Izuku leaned right and felt the punch fly past him. Ok, he could do this. There were a few more steps, then a change in air pressure on his other side, so he dodged again. The next punch came quicker, since the villain was probably trying to be unpredictable, but Izuku ducked so that the punch only knocked his hood off rather than breaking his nose.

The next punch was on his left again, but it was eerily similar to Kacchan's right hook, so Izuku was ready! He grabbed the man's arm and yanked as hard as he could, imitating the way Amplifier moved her feet when she judo-flipped villains. He opened his eyes to see the guy lying dazed on the ground, so Izuku hurried to flip him over onto his stomach and zip tie his hands behind him before he could disappear again. He'd done it! He'd taken him down!

Shouta was freaking out. He'd heard Viridian scream a few minutes ago, but he couldn't afford to take his eyes off the two villains he was fighting. He just had to hope the kid would be alright. Viridian had been doing this for two months now, he knew enough not to die. It was just a question about whether he would actually use what he knew. Damn problem child.

But for right now, Shouta had his own problems to worry about. These two couldn't do too much in the short time that it took to blink, but he still needed to end this quickly. He used his capture weapon to grab one and toss him into the other, but that one was sturdy enough that he just grunted, then threw another punch. Shouta jumped into the air to dodge, and flipped to land behind the guy without ever

taking his eyes off him, a trick he'd perfected in high school. He managed to kick him in the kidneys, but by that time, the first one was back on his feet and swinging for Shouta's face too fast for him to dodge.

Shouta flinched, but before the hit could land, the villain was hit on the side of the head with a soup can and went down. Shouta glanced back to see Viridian standing there with that same half-determined, half-terrified expression he'd had during their last fight together, having obviously just thrown the can. In the split second Shouta watched, Viridian grabbed his slingshot, which had somehow ended up on the ground, and drew it back.

"Duck!"

Shouta didn't hesitate to comply and a second later, a marble shot over his head and he heard the final villain swear. He turned and shot his capture weapon out in one fluid movement, catching the still swearing villain by surprise. He wrapped the weapon around the man's ankle and launched him into the wall, then grabbed him by the hair and hit his head against the wall to knock him out. When that was done, Shouta looked around frantically to make sure Viridian was alright, only to find him already comforting the victim.

Shouta looked around the alley and took stock of the situation. In addition to a zip tied villain that Viridian must have taken down, the floor was littered with marbles and...was that Viridian's notebook? Shouta glanced over at Viridian, who was now making sure the victim called the police. It must have fallen out of the problem child's pocket sometime during the fight.

He picked the notebook up and, against his better judgement, started leafing through it. So he was curious, sue him. There were diagrams notating different fighting styles along with what heroes used them and Shouta smiled fondly when he realized that the kid had been trying to imitate some of his moves as well. He kept reading and was pleased to find that the kid had started focusing on villain analysis recently.

He didn't recognize most of the villains Viridian had written about, so he didn't bother to read carefully, but there was one entry about a villain Amplifier arrested a week or so ago that caught his eye. She'd been complaining about how hard it was because the guy's quirk let him see through solid objects, a skill he'd been using to peek inside women's restrooms in the bars he visited. He'd managed to hide from

her for a good while because he'd just hide behind something so she couldn't see him, but he'd always been able to see her coming. Eventually, Viridian had apparently led her to him, but the whole chase had lasted several hours.

Viridian's notes were mostly stream of consciousness, and his handwriting got messier the faster he wrote, so it took a few moments for Shouta to get used to the style and figure out what the notes said, but when he did...whoa.

Guy seems to be an emitter type. Always runs away moments before Amplifier finds him, like he already knows she's coming. Some type of premonition quirk? Probably not, those are super rare and highly regulated, if someone like that were a villain, the government would know and warn the public, that's what they've done before when it's happened. So other possibilities? Maybe he sees her coming? Some remote vision quirk? How did he get caught in a chase then? Limit? He doesn't seem to run until she's right around the corner, so x-ray vision? Then...there must be objects he can't see through...lead? Impractical. But if he's looking through objects, then he won't think to look up!

Thinking back, Amplifier had said she was surprised because Viridian led her over the rooftops to find the peeping tom. Had he done that specifically to counteract the man's quirk? He'd managed to figure out the villain's quirk and how to work around it just from watching what he did, without knowing anything about him beforehand. That was amazing!

Shouta went back and started reading some of the other analyses more carefully. If he'd thought that the peeping tom analysis was the exception to the rule, he'd been wrong. Every analysis showed similar depth and thought, and could easily rival a professional analysit's skill, even if Viridian's weren't as polished. Shouta had been assuming that Viridian had a mild speed quirk, but from what he'd read so far, an analysis quirk was more likely, and a powerful one at that. This kid…

"Eraserhead, sir?"

Shouta looked up to see Viridian staring at the notebook in his hands. Well, he may as well let the kid know what he thought, since he'd already been caught, "These analyses are pretty impressive, kid."

To his surprise, rather than accepting the praise, Viridian shook his head, "No they're not. I just write things down so I don't forget them,

it's not like I'm writing anything special."

Shouta's eyebrows shot up,"You don't think this is anything special? Kid, you figure out people's quirks and how to beat them within minutes."

Viridian shook his head again, "Anyone can do that, they're just smart enough that they don't have to write it down to remember it. I'm not smart like them."

Shouta frowned. From what he'd read, the kid was probably a genius, so he must be joking when he said he wasn't smart. Unless...but Viridian's self esteem couldn't be *that* bad, could it?

"Don't kid yourself, problem child," he held up the book, "I wish my students were half this smart."

Viridan fidgeted for a moment before suddenly snatching the notebook out of Shouta's hands and running off. Shouta groaned and considered chasing after him, but some of the villains were already starting to wake up and the police would be arriving any moment. Damn problem child.

Izuku was already a few blocks away by the time he stopped to catch his breath. He'd have to be more careful with his notebook, that was so embarrassing! Eraser had to lie and call him smart just to be polite even though he'd probably been creeped out by Izuku's stupid ramblings just like his classmates were. Because there was obviously no way he *actually* believed Izuku was smart, right? But...Eraserhead also didn't really care about politeness and social norms, so he wouldn't lie just to be polite, so...but he also hadn't seemed as angry as Izuku expected considering that he had a bruise from when…

"Dang it!" Izuku muttered. "I forgot to apologize!"

Problem Child

Chapter Summary

Shouta shares his concerns with Tsukauchi and Amplifier.

Shouta couldn't help playing with the marble Viridian had thrown at him earlier as he sat by Tsukauchi's desk after his shift. The kid was smart, making the marbles pull triple duty as a way to call heroes, ammo, and a sort of makeshift signature. Viridian would be a popular and effective hero if he'd just get off the streets and into a hero program, but first, he'd have to learn how to take better care of himself, because he really shouldn't be on the streets the night after he was almost killed.

The kid must have an insane pain tolerance to be out and fighting so soon. The only indication that Viridian had been injured at all was a moderately slower running speed and a slight stiffness when he twisted, but he hadn't let it hold him back as he fought. Shouta didn't know if Viridian had broken his ribs, or just bruised them, but the kid shouldn't be so used to working through the pain. He also shouldn't be used to hiding his injuries. Shouta wasn't even sure the problem child had been doing it consciously, because the way the kid had been doing it instinctively, like pretending he was fine was a habit he'd developed after years of practice.

And wasn't *that* concerning? Viridian's obviously high pain tolerance and tendency to hide his injuries were just the latest entries in a disturbingly long list of concerns that Shouta had about the kid. He ran straight into danger when the most intelligent thing to do was run away, and if there was one thing Shouta knew, it was that Viridian wasn't stupid. He'd known the kid was smart just from the way he'd memorized everyone's patrol routes and that intelligence had only been confirmed by the way he targeted any weakness he could in his target's defenses.

But then he'd seen the notebook.

The kid was probably a genius and Nedzu would be salivating if he'd had a chance to read what Shouta had, and yet the kid insisted he wasn't smart. At first, Shouta had assumed he was joking, but the more he thought about the conversation they'd had earlier, the more he realized that Viridian honestly believed what he'd said. Shouta didn't know if he even wanted to think about what must have

happened in Viridian's life to convince the kid that he was an idiot despite his obvious skills and that was even more true if he had an analysis quirk.

Which brought Shouta back to his list of concerns. If the kid thought he was stupid despite his intelligence, what other lies did he beleive? Did he somehow think he was worthless? Did he think that his life was worth less than the lives of the people he saved? Shouta thought back to the fight with the crab villain. Viridian hadn't thought twice about giving up his weapons so Shouta could fight more effectively, and then the first thing he'd done after the fight was ask if Shouta was ok, with no regard for his own safety or well being.

It was like Viridian had decided in that moment that it was ok if he died, as long as Shouta lived.

He stared at the marble again, seeing how the green and black swirled together. Was the kid….?

"Oh! You got one too!"

Shouta flinched as Amplifier's overly peppy voice practically yelled behind him and he almost dropped the marble. As it was, he fumbled it and only just managed to palm it before it rolled onto the floor.

He turned to glare at Amplifier, who smiled sheepishly at him, "Sorry…"

"What do you guys have?" Tsukauchi asked as he walked up with paperwork and coffee.

"Viridian's got a new calling card!" Amplifier grinned and dug around in her pockets before triumphantly showing Tsukauchi a green marble identical to the one Shouta had almost dropped. "He's started throwing these instead of rocks so that we know it's him."

Tsukauchi frowned at the marble, then turned to Shouta, "And you have one too?"

Shouta sighed and showed Tsukauchi his marble. Honestly, he wouldn't be surprised if the marbles became a badge of honor among the local heroes. He could see them turning into a sort of membership card for an exclusive club of heroes Viridian trusted even though Viridian went to heroes based on availability, not trust or competence. Still, he wouldn't put it beyond his colleagues to start collecting them.

“It seems he’s embracing his popularity then.” Tsukauchi said bitterly. “If he’s putting in the extra effort to have a signature.”

“I don’t think that’s what he had in mind.” Shouta said as he put his marble away. “I don’t know if you’ve heard, but Viridian somehow got his hands on a slingshot, and the marbles are his primary ammo. As far as I know, he wasn’t actually planning on them being a calling card.”

“He has a slingshot!?” Amplifier bounced up and down in her seat. “Have you seen him use it? Is his aim any good?”

Shouta nodded, “He hasn’t mastered it by any means, but he’s good enough to get the job done. He led me to a group earlier and kept pelting them with marbles to distract them and make them easier for me to take down, and he didn’t hit me once. He’ll probably get better with it the longer he trains, but for now, he seems to be more comfortable with close range combat. He has some dual wielding pipes that he uses as bludgeoning weapons.”

“Pipes?” Tsukauchi asked. “Aren’t they considered an improvised weapon? Why didn’t he invest in something better, like tonfa? There are more than enough illegal weapons dealers that he wouldn’t have a problem finding something.”

“And yet the problem child chooses to use something that can be bought at literally any hardware store.” Shouta said. “It does make him harder to track.”

“Not that we’re going to bother.” Amplifier piped up. “He’s not hurting anyone.”

“He’s a vigilante.” Tsukauchi said sternly. “And we need to be prepared to capture him if he ever crosses the line into villainy. You both know how common that is.”

They were all silent for a moment as they remembered Stendal and the other vigilantes who had turned. Vigilantes tended to make extremely frightening villains.

“Viridian’s still young.” Shouta said finally. “There’s still time to guide him onto the right path.”

“Yeah!” Amplifier agreed. “He’s just a kid, so go easy on him, Tsuky.”

Tsukauchi signed heavily, “Just keep an eye on him. If he gives any

indication that he's going too far, you need to bring him in. If we catch him quickly enough, he might even be a candidate for the vigilante rehabilitation program."

"That dusty old thing?" Amplifier asked. "I thought it was just an artifact from the time when hero licenses were still getting started. Has anyone even gone through the program in the last few decades?"

"It's not common by any means," Shouta said, "because society expects heroes to start legally now, but the laws are still on the books. Since the program hasn't been overturned, law enforcement can still petition the hero commission to allow a vigilante to participate, provided that they don't use excessive force in their takedowns."

"And since vigilantes like Knuckleduster, who routinely beat villains to a pulp, are more common," Tsukauchi said, "most modern vigilantes don't qualify. The hero commision isn't likely to approve an untrained kid like Viridian for the program anyway, otherwise I'd try to get him approved now."

"I guess that makes sense." Amplifier pouted. "But I would still love to see Viridian as a legit hero. Can you imagine seeing kids with green hoodies and little marbles on keychains or something?"

"What makes you think he'll even want merch?" Shouta said. "He might want to stay underground."

"Don't be ridiculous!" Amplifier waved away his concerns. "He's a happy young teenager, of course he wants to be famous!"

Shouta frowned. The kid had only had one article written about him, but even that had seemed to make him uncomfortable. And Shouta was also worried that *happy* wasn't the right word to describe Viridian's mental state…

"What's wrong, Eraser?" Tsukauchi asked. "Something's nagging at you."

"It's just…" Shouta dragged a hand down his face, making him look even more exhausted than he actually was. "There's a lot of little things that have been adding up and I'm not quite sure what to do about it."

"Maybe we can help." Tsukauchi said kindly. "What's bothering you?"

"I think Viridian might be depressed." Shouta said.

“What?” Amplifier said. “He’s a teenage boy, why would he be depressed?”

“From what I’ve gathered, he doesn’t have the best life.” Shouta started rolling the marble between his fingers again, “Last night, he almost died helping me with a fight, but he was out again tonight, fighting like it had never even happened.”

“So he’s reckless.” Tsukauchi said. “That’s pretty common in teenagers. It doesn’t mean he’s depressed.”

“Yes, being reckless is normal in teenagers, I’m a teacher, so I know that better than most, but Viridian’s recklessness goes beyond what I see in my students.” Shouta said. “It’s almost like he believes that his life isn’t worth anything, which isn’t an attitude someone develops overnight.”

“You think he might be being abused.” Tsukauchi said in realization.

Shouta shook his head, “Not at home. Viridian’s never mentioned that, but when I mentioned school once, the kid completely shut down.”

“Bullies…” Tsukauchi said.

Shouta nodded, “He acts like he’s used to hiding injuries and pain, so it’s possible he’s been trying to hide the bullying from his family.”

“That means he’s been treating his injuries himself, doesn’t it?” Amplifier said. “Remember that first time I actually talked to him? A store clerk got severe burns during a robbery and when I went to go check on the victim, Viridian had already given first aid. When I asked him how he knew how to do that, he just said he’d had a lot of practice. I didn’t think anything of it at the time, but do you think…?”

Shouta sighed, “Unfortunately, yes, he most likely had to practice on himself. I don’t think the bullying is entirely physical, though. Psychologically…”

He trailed off. It was just a hunch, but he hoped he was wrong. He hoped that Viridian was emotionally resilient and had access to the correct resources to deal with the abuse he faced at home. He hoped that the problem child had become a vigilante because he thought they were cool or to annoy the heroes. But…

Tsukauchi gestured for him to continue and Shouta sighed, “He doesn’t know his own worth. I got a peek at his notebook tonight and

the kid is brillient, but he seems to genuinly beleive that he's stupid. He runs into fights that he isn't prepared for and he doesn't seem to care about his own safety, despite the fact that he is almost excessively worried about the safety of the victims and even the heroes he's fighting with. The first time I met him, I told him that he shouldn't get into fights because he didn't want to die and he hesitated! "

Shouta rubbed the bridge of his nose in exhaustion and frustration as Amplifier and Tsukauchi stared at him with wide eyes.

"I think Viridian might be suicidal."

Bullies

Chapter Summary

Which is scarier, bullies or villains?

Chapter Notes

I'm sorry.

A kick to Izuku's shin woke him up. Had he fallen asleep in class again? He'd been getting a lot less sleep since he started going out as a vigilante, which of course led to him getting more tired during the day, but it only got worse now that he had a still-healing concussion. His teachers didn't seem to care enough about Izuku to notice when he fell asleep in class, but his peers were apparently a different story. He looked up to see a few students crowded around his desk, but most of the class, including Kacchan, had already left for lunch.

"What's the matter Deku?" That was the kid with extendable eyeballs that hung around Kacchan sometimes. "Busy night whoring yourself out or something?"

"No." A kid with a minor glow quirk said. "Deku's too useless even for that!"

Eyeballs laughed, "You're right. Just do everyone a favor, Deku and die. Leave some oxygen for the people who actually deserve to breathe."

Izuku stared at the floor and tried to ignore them as he gathered his books and stood to go to lunch. He was already halfway through the day, he could get through this. It was only another few hours. He made it all the way to the hall before his classmates started harassing him again.

"Hey Deku!" Eyeballs growled. "Are you ignoring us?"

Izuku ran down the hall as fast as he could. If he could get to the lunchroom, then hopefully his classmates would get distracted by the promise of food and even if they weren't, the beatings tended to be a little better if there were a lot of people around. Unfortunately, in his haste to get away, Izuku forgot to watch where he was going and ran straight into the kid in his class whose hair was made of boulders.

“Watch it, Deku!” Boulders said.

“I-I’m sorry!” Izuku stuttered. “I-I wasn’t looking where I was going and I just want to go to lunch, so….”

He tried to duck around him, but Boulders put a large hand on his shoulder and shoved him back before he could, “Do you think you can just run into me and not face any consequences?”

Izuku started shaking and turned around. If he could run before the other two caught up then he might be able to take a different route to the lunchroom and…

“There you are, Deku!” Eyeballs leered at him as he and Glow cut off his patch of escape. Izuku glanced behind him, only to see Boulders standing threateningly behind him.

“Were you guys looking for this nerd?” Boulders asked.

“Deku here thinks he can ignore us.” Glow said.

“Yeah.” Eyeballs leaned into Izuku’s personal space. “He thinks he’s better than us.”

Izuku shrank, “N-no, that’s n-not it at all! I j-just really think we should be getting to lunch…”

“No,” Boulders turned both fists into rocks and slammed Izuku up against the wall, “I think maybe we should teach this quirkless loser a lesson first.”

Inko rushed to the school in a panic, almost forgetting her purse at work in her hurry to get to Izuku. The woman on the phone hadn’t said much, just that Izuku had gotten into a fight at school and that she needed to come pick him up. A fight? Her baby didn’t get into fights! He watched them, he analyzed them, but he didn’t get into them!

What had happened? What if Izuku was hurt? What if he…Inko shook her head. No, she couldn’t let her anxiety get the best of her right now. Izuku needed her. She needed to be calm for Izuku.

When she finally reached the school, she hurried through the front doors and followed the signs to the front office, “Excuse me? I got a call from you about my son, Izuku?”

“Mrs. Midoriya?” The secretary asked. Inko recognized her voice as the one who had called her telling her to come in. Inko nodded and the secretary gestured to a door off to one side of the office. “The principal is already waiting for you. Go right in.”

“Thank you!” Inko rushed through the door but stopped and put her hand over her mouth when she caught sight of Izuku. “Oh, baby!”

Izuku was huddling in a chair across from the angry-looking principal. His uniform was torn and would definitely need to be replaced, but that wasn’t what brought tears to Inko’s eyes. No, what brought tears to her eyes was the mottled collection of new bruises covering her son’s face and neck. From the way the bruises dipped below his collar, Inko had no doubt that his arms and torso were in a similar state. What had happened?

“Mrs. Midoriya, you’re here. Good.” The principal gestured for her to take the chair beside Izuku. “Now that you’ve finally arrived, we can discuss Izuku’s punishment.”

“Punishment!?” Inko looked between the principal and Izuku, who seemed to be trying to make himself small enough to disappear with no luck. “You haven’t even told me what this is about?”

“As my secretary explained over the phone, Izuku instigated a fight.”

“A fight!?” Inko looked at the principal incredulously. “Look at the state of my son! That wasn’t a fight, it was a beating!”

The principal’s mouth tightened into a stern frown. “He attacked a number of his classmates unprovoked and forced them to take defensive action. As I’m sure you are aware, Mrs. Midoriya, our school has a zero tolerance policy toward fighting and as such, I am suspending Izuku for two weeks.”

“S-suspension?” Inko shook her head. “What about the other students? Are they being suspended too for what they did to my son?”

The principal glared at Izuku, then at her, “We are not in the habit of punishing victims for defending themselves, Mrs. Midoriya. Your son was the one who started the fight, so he’s the one who will receive punishment.”

“What?!” Inko couldn’t help raising her voice. “But my son *didn’t* start that fight, I know Izuku, he wouldn’t do that. Those other children…”

“If you have a problem with the way I run my school, Mrs. Midoriya,” the principal interrupted, “then perhaps you should find a different one. ”

Inko stared at him in disbelief, “What?”

“That will be all Mrs. Midoriya.” The principal turned back to the papers on his desk. “Izuku will not be allowed back in school for the next two weeks. If he shows up on campus you will have to come pick him up and if it happens again, we will have no choice but to pursue legal action. Have a nice day.”

For the first time, Inko realized that the principal hadn’t once tried to ask her son for his side of the story or even allowed him to defend himself since she’d arrived. There was always the possibility that he’d given Izuku that chance before she’d gotten to the school, but with the way the conversation had gone, Inko didn’t think that was very likely. She’d been called here so the principal could execute punishment, not to resolve the situation or figure out what really happened.

Izuku didn’t look up as they left and started walking toward the train station. What had been happening at that school? What had Izuku been going through? She knew that there had been a few problems with some kids being mean to him right after he was diagnosed quirkless, but he’d always told her so they could report the issue and then he’d said they stopped. Unless...

“It never actually stopped. Did it?”

Inko watched as Izuku froze, then seemed to physically force himself to keep watching. Her poor baby, he’d been going through all this alone for years! Why didn’t he tell her? They were all each other had! He should have told her, she could have…

Could have what? Gone to the principal? A fat lot of good that would’ve done. What could she have even done, if she had known?

“I’m not mad at you, Izuku.” She said quietly. “I’m sad that you felt like you couldn’t tell me, but I understand why you didn’t. You can be honest with me, baby. The bullying didn’t stop, did it?”

Izuku swallowed, then shook his head and Inko felt her heart break. Her baby was never this quiet. What had those boys been doing to him to force Izuku, who could hardly think without mumbling, to go completely silent. She wanted to...well, it probably wasn’t very healthy to want to hurt children. But they had hurt Izuku. They

deserved it.

“Thank you for telling me, baby.” Inko said. “I’m here. I don’t know what we’re gonna do, because the school obviously isn’t going to be any help, but we’ll get through this together, okay?”

Izuku looked up at her and smiled shakily, then winced as they started going down the stairs to the station. Inko frowned and looked at her son a little more closely. Sure, that wince could have been from any one of his numerous bruises, but...had he been cradling his left arm like that the whole time? How had she not noticed that? Well, she’d probably been distracted by the bruises and the jerk that called himself the principal, so she couldn’t blame herself, but from the way he was holding it, his arm had to be in a lot of pain.

“Izuku, what’s the matter with your arm?”

Izuku froze and looked up at her with scared wide eyes before forcing a smile onto his face, “It’s nothing, Mom. Don’t worry about it.”

Inko frowned. The first words her son had spoken to her since this whole mess began, and he was trying to convince her that everything was fine. He obviously wasn’t fine, “It’s not nothing, Izuku, you look like you’re in pain. Let me see it.”

Izuku shook his head and tried to rush ahead further into the station. Inko didn’t know what possessed her to grab his injured arm to hold him back.

“Ow!” Izuku screamed and snatched his arm away from her, the tears he’d been holding back falling freely down his cheeks.

Inko held up her hands calmingly, “Izuku, baby, you’re hurt, just let me look at it.”

He hesitated a long moment before extending the arm out to her and looking away in embarrassment. She gently rolled up the sleeve and gasped. The whole arm was turning an ugly shade of purple and Inko really hoped she was imagining the strange way it seemed to bend now that Izuku wasn’t holding it against his body.

“Izuku, we’re going to the hospital.”

Izuku snatched his arm back again and rolled down the sleeve, “Mom, I don’t need…”

She shot him a look that shut him up, “Izuku, from the looks of it, that arm might be broken. You need to go to the hospital.”

Izuku went silent again as they switched directions and got on the train that would take them to the hospital, rather than taking them home. Inko didn’t like her son going silent like this, but it was preferable to him lying and insisting he was fine when he obviously wasn’t. What were they going to do?

The Hospital

Chapter Summary

Izuku actually gets medical attention for once.

Izuku let Mom lead him into the waiting room and he sat down while she went to the desk to fill out the paperwork. When she was done, she came and sat beside him, but there wasn't anything she could say to make the situation better, so they just sat silently until Izuku's name was called.

A nurse led them into an examination room and took Izuku's vitals. She took in Izuku's bruises, then looked at Inko suspiciously, "What happened?"

"Nothing!" Izuku said quickly. "I just fell…"

"There was a fight at school." Inko interrupted. "He's been hiding the bullying from me, so it makes sense he'd hide it from you as well, but you don't have to do that anymore Izuku."

Izuku stared at the ground again and the nurse nodded before she left to go get the doctor.

"Izuku…"

Whatever she was going to say was cut off by the doctor opening the door, "Izuku Midoriya?"

Izuku nodded and the doctor sat down beside the examination table he was sitting on, "Can you tell me what's going on?"

"I'm fine!" Izuku said, "I can handle it, Mom's just worried!"

"Izuku." Inko was starting to get exasperated. Why wouldn't Izuku let them help him?

"That's ok." The doctor smiled. "I'm sure you're a strong young man. But why don't you show me what your mom's worried about, to ease her nerves at the very least."

Izuku frowned for a moment before shrugging off his uniform jacket, then his shirt, struggling as he tried to undo the buttons one handed. Inko almost helped him, but one look was enough to tell her that

Izuku needed to do that much on his own. She struggled not to gasp in horror when she saw the collection of bruises that had been hiding beneath his clothes, some already in the healing stages, which meant that this was far from the only beating Izuku had receieved.

The doctor though, just took the injuries in stride and gently started prodding at his arm, “Does this hurt?”

Izuku winced, but shook his head.

The doctor sighed, “I’d feel more comfortable getting some x-rays, ok? Mrs. Midoirya, you stay here, and I’ll walk Izuku over to radiology, okay?”

Izuku thought everyone was overreacting. Sure, his arm hurt, but it wasn’t broken. Probably. Honestly, Izuku hadn’t thought through what would happen if it was and they hadn’t gone to the hospital, but his arm didn’t hurt enough to be broken. After the x-rays were taken, he was expecting the doctor to lead him back to the room where his mom was waiting, but the doctor led him to a different one instead.

The doctor closed the door and turned to face Izuku, “Midoriya? I just want to let you know that you’re safe here and we will do everything in our power to help you, ok?”

Izuku nodded. He wasn’t quite sure why the doctor was telling him this. Wasn’t that what doctors were there for?

“Good.” The doctor siad. “Now, is everything ok at home?”

Izuku looked at the doctor in confusion, “Yes? Why wouldn’t it be?”

“Well, sometimes when kids come in with injuries like yours…”

Izuku’s eyes widened, “You think *Mom* did this to me? No!” he tried to instinctively wave his arms in front of him, but winced at the pain the action caused. “No, Mom would never hurt me.”

“Are you sure?” The doctor asked softly. “You don’t have to protect her.”

“No! I just…” Izuku started crying again. “I love my mom! I didn’t tell her about the bullying because I didn’t want her to worry and there’s nothing she could have done anyways and I didn’t want to get anyone in trouble, but then it got worse and I still didn’t tell her and then

today happened and then the principal called and I didn't want to come here and now she's gonna get in trouble and it's all my fault and…"

"Breath, Midoriya." The doctor sounded slightly panicked. "Your mom isn't going to get in trouble. We just needed to make sure that there wasn't any abuse happening and for that, we needed to ask without her in the room. I didn't mean to scare you, I'm sorry."

Izuku nodded shakily, "O-okay, that makes sense. Sorry."

The doctor smiled, "It's not your fault. I'm glad your mom's taking care of you, just...let her know in the future. Make her job a little easier, okay?"

"O-okay." He felt a little bad for lying to the doctor, but things would be so much better if Mom just thought this was an isolated incident. She wouldn't have to worry so much.

The doctor walked him back to the room where Mom was waiting and opened the file the radiologist gave him, "Alright, it looks like you have a break in your left arm, but your ribs are fine, so that's the good news. I just need to set the bone and put a cast on it and you'll be good to go. What color do you want?"

Izuku shrugged. A few months ago, he probably would have gone with All Might colors, but now…

"Green's fine." He decided finally. It didn't need to match his vigilante gear, but green was his vigilante color, so it made him feel...useful? Not like a deku who got his arm broken at school and got his mother accused of child abuse. He was so stupid.

The cast took longer to put on than Izuku had thought it would. It had to dry in-between the various layers, but by the end, he had a semi-comfortable cast that encased his arm from the elbow down. Now if only he actually had friends to sign it.

"Alright, Midoriyas, you're almost good to go. I'll just send in the nurse who can go over how to care for the cast."

"Thank you so much." Mom said.

The doctor smiled, "My pleasure."

Once they were alone, the same awkward silence fell that had

dominated the whole afternoon. Inko looked over at Izuku and wondered how to bring up what she'd started thinking about while Izuku had been getting his X-rays.

"I don't think that school is working." She said finally.

Izuku looked at her, "What?"

"The school." She said. "I don't think it's a good fit. If they knew what those other kids were doing to you and blamed you instead of doing anything to stop it, then…" she sighed, "but I know how close you've always been with Katsuki. I don't want to separate you from him."

Izuku bit his lip and Inko could see his brain working overtime as he debated what to say.

"I-I don't think Kacchan would miss me."

Inko felt her heart break all over again. Had Katsuki…? She'd hoped that he had protected Izuku because he wanted to be a hero, but with how *broken* Izuku sounded, and how convinced he seemed that Katsuki wouldn't miss him, then...oh, her poor baby.

"We could look into transferring you to a different school." She said.

To her surprise, Izuku shook his head, "There wouldn't be any point. I'm the problem and that's going to be the same wherever I go. Going to a new school would just mean I'd be quirkless *and* the new kid."

Inko frowned. Unfortunately, she saw Izuku's logic. The bullying had started because he was diagnosed quirkless and Izuku was right, that wasn't going to change. She'd like to believe that a new school would be better and kinder, but...kids were cruel. There was a good chance his new classmates would be just as bad or even worse than the ones he had now. She couldn't do that to him.

But she also couldn't, in good conscience, send him back to Aldera. Not after how they'd had the *audacity* to blame him for being bullied. But what other options were there?

"What if we could find something online?" She suggested. "You can't be bullied by other students if there are none."

Izuku looked skeptical, "Does something like that even exist?"

Inko shrugged, "I don't know, but if it does, would you at least look

into it? See if it's something you'd be interested in?"

Izuku thought for a long moment and Inko was starting to get worried she'd somehow said the wrong thing when Izuku smiled, "Okay, Mom. I promise I'll look into it when we get home."

"Tomorrow." Inko said. "When we get home, we're not going to worry about anything except eating dinner and watching TV. deal?"

Izuku laughed, "Deal."

There was a knock on the door and the nurse walked in, "Hello, Midoriyas. I'm here to give you some instructions, then you'll be good to go. That cast needs to stay on for about six weeks to give your arm adequate time to heal. Keep it dry and don't participate in any sports or vigorous activities that could irritate your arm until you get the cast off. Make sure to call us if you think anything is wrong and that's about it! You're free to go."

Mom thanked the nurse and they left. Izuku felt his stomach twist as he mentally reviewed the instructions. He wasn't allowed to do any physical activity that could jostle his arm for the next month and a half. If he did, he could reinjure his arm, which would just cause more trouble for everyone and put Mom through all this worry all over again, and he couldn't do that to her.

So what was he supposed to do about his vigilantism?

Investigation

Chapter Summary

Eraser follows a lead for the trigger investigation.

Shouta looked over the file for the crab villain as he waited for Tsukauchi to arrive so they could interrogate him. Of all the trigger dealers he'd shaken down over the past few years, most just evaded his questions and a few tried to run, but no one else had shot up before he had the chance to ask a single question. In Shouta's line of work, a reaction like that meant that the person had something to hide.

According to his files, the crab villain was named Jun Hamasaki and some mid level dealers had pointed Shouta his way, saying that he sold them the drugs. He couldn't be anywhere near the top, he didn't have anywhere *near* enough connections to bring the drugs over from America, but he was the highest-level dealer Shouta had found so far. Everything pointed to Hamasaki knowing something.

Which is why he had fought tooth and nail, even against a kid like Viridian. Shouta took a deep breath and reminded himself that trigger often induced rage, so Hamasaki probably hadn't been thinking entirely clearly when he almost killed Viridian. Shouta tried to ignore the voice in his head that said that he'd been thinking clearly when he dosed himself, and he clearly knew what would happen. It wouldn't do any good to punch Hamasaki in the face the moment he entered the interrogation room, but that didn't mean Shouta had to like the guy.

Tsukauki calmly walked through the door to the station and put his trenchcoat on the chair at his desk, "Sorry I'm late, Eraser. I was having lunch with an old friend."

Shouta grunted in response, "Are you ready?"

Tskuauchi nodded and took the file, then led Shouta to the room where Hamasaki was waiting. They had to pass through the observation room first, which meant that Shouta got a good look at the villain through the glass. He had been expecting the guy to be defiant, considering how hard he'd fought to avoid being arrested, but instead Hamasaki was pale and jittery. He looked terrified.

Tsukauchi saw him staring, “He’s been like that ever since you brought him in. We’ve tried telling him he’s safe here, but he obviously doesn’t believe us. It definitely lends credence to your assumption that he actually knows something.”

Shouta nodded and followed Tsukauchi through the door. They both sat down at the table opposite Hamasaki, who looked even worse close up. One of his hands was tapping at the table and a thin sheen of sweat coated his forehead despite the fact that the room was air-conditioned. He had information, that much was certain, the only problem now was getting him to talk.

“Alright, you know why you’re here.” Tsukauchi began. “Eraserhead picked you up a few days ago for trigger possession and assaulting a pro-hero, both of which have prison sentences attached. However, the law is willing to be lenient and take time off your sentence if you provide us with useful information.”

Hamasaki shook his head, “I don’t know nothing.”

“You fought tooth and nail to avoid answering my questions.” Shouta said dryly. “Who sells you the trigger?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about.” Hamasaki glanced up at the camera and Shouta frowned. Was he scared of dirty cops? That couldn’t be. Sure, the trigger operation was growing, but villains had to have a significant amount of power to pull a cop to their side and that took time. Trigger had only been in Japan a few years, so he had to be scared of someone else.

“We could try to find a way to sweeten the deal.” Tsukauchi tried. “Surely there’s something that would make your life more comfortable behind bars. Maybe protective custody?”

“Doesn’t matter how comfortable a cell is if you never live to see it.” Hamasaki muttered.

“We have the resources to protect you.” Shouta said. “Whoever’s behind trigger, they can’t be powerful enough to reach you in witness protection.”

“You’re underestimating him.” Hamasaki said darkly. “You think it’s just some guys in their mom’s basement, but that couldn’t be farther from the truth. You don’t know what you’re dealing with.”

Shouta looked at Tsukauchi, who leaned forward, “Then tell us. Who

are you so afraid of?"

"I…" Hamasaki hesitated, then slammed his mouth shut. "No. I'm not saying nothing else."

"Well then I guess we'll just have to learn the hard way." Tsukauchi stood up. "Come on, Eraser. This guy obviously doesn't want to tell us anything. It's his fault if we die because we didn't know who to avoid."

Shouta stood. He wasn't sure Hamasaki was going to be so easily manipulated, but Tsukauchi had already made his move and, well, it was worth a try. They certainly weren't going to get anything by bargaining.

To his surprise, they had hardly opened the door to leave when Hamasaki spoke up, "No one's ever seen him."

Shouta and Tsukauchi shared a glance, then closed the door and sat back down.

"It's just one man?" Tsukauchi asked. "Behind the whole trigger operation?"

"It's bigger than you think." Hamasaki said softly. "It's not just trigger, but...just stop looking into it. He's too powerful, you'll never stand a chance."

So the man behind the Japanese trigger operation had a fearsome reputation. It wasn't the first time Shouta had run into a villain who used his reputation to make sure people didn't fight back. Most of the time, those guys were all bark and no bite. They talked up their quirks and connections, but were b-ranked villains at the worst, not the s-ranked ones they made themselves out to be.

"Do you have a name?" Tsukauchi asked. "So we know who to avoid."

Hamasaki shook his head, "Nobody knows his name, but...they call him the symbol of evil."

Shouta narrowed his eyes. The symbol of evil. Like a play on the symbol of peace? No wonder people were so scared of this guy if he made himself out to be All Might's equal. He glanced over at Tsukauchi, surprised to see fear in his expression as well. He had to know that this symbol of evil was bluffing, right?

Suddenly, a piercing alarm split the air, making all three of them flinch. Sansa came running into the room not a second later, fur on end as he yelled, “There’s a villain attack right outside! We need all hands on deck!”

Shouta swore and ran outside, hands already on his capture weapon. There was a small crowd outside and civilians were screaming as they ran away from the dozen or so minor villains that were attacking at random, like they were trying to do the greatest damage in the least amount of time. The media vultures were already starting to pull up and film, though they at least had the good sense to stay away from the main fight.

The villains were more like thugs, but there were still enough of them to be dangerous if Shouta didn’t take them down quickly. He activated his quirk and looked at the closest one, some guy will bullets shooting out of his fingers, then quickly wrapped him up and flung him toward the waiting police, then started in on the next one.

Rock Lock had turned up while Shouta had been fighting, so he managed to take one of the villains down by locking a rope in place around him. Between the two of them, it only took them another ten minutes to round up all the villains and get them into police custody. It wouldn’t have taken so long if there weren’t so many of them. Gangs hadn’t been a problem since All Might beame number one, so how had so many thugs decided to attack the police station at the same time? They had to be pretty stupid to attack a place that they knew was filled with police. Even if they weren’t scared of the cops, pro-heroes were always in and out of the station, so why attack? It just didn’t make sense.

Slowly, they managed to get all the villains off the street and into the holding cells inside the station. There was going to be so much paperwork! Thankfully most of it would be done by the police themselves, but still, Shouta wasn’t looking forward to it. That could wait, however, until he and Tsukauchi finished interrogating Hamasaki.

The attack had terrible timing. They had just been starting to get useful information when they’d both had to leave to handle the attack, so hopefully they’d be able to just pick up where they left off, though Shouta wasn’t getting his hopes up. It had been a miracle they’d been able to get as much as they had out of the guy, and the attack would probably have spooked him silent. It was annoying.

He tracked down Tsukauchi and together they made their way to the interrogation room. Shouta almost didn't bother looking through the window before entering, but when he did he had to do a double take. He looked to Tsukauchi to make sure he wasn't seeing things before they both swore and barged into the empty room.

"This is the same interrogation room, right?" He asked. "This is where we left him?"

"Yes." Tsukauchi looked pale. "He was still cuffed to the table when we left."

Shouta looked more closely at the room. The cuffs were gone as well, which wasn't normal for an escape. Most of the villains who tried would pick the cuffs, then leave them behind so they wouldn't be slowed down by the dead weight. If Shouta didn't know better, he'd almost say that Hamasaki had never been there at all.

Tsukauchi was already striding back out into the bullpen, "Sansa! What happened to the villain we had in interrogation room six?"

Shouta followed to see Sansa at the front desk looking through the log book, "It says here he was transferred, but that can't be right. The villains were blocking the front entrance, so I suppose they could have taken him out the back, but the attack was taking up almost all of our manpower. The person who transferred him also forgot to sign their name."

"Pull up the security feed." Shouta said. "The cameras must have caught them leaving."

Sansa grimaced, "One of the villains' attacks missed their target and hit the power box. We just barely got the lights back on five minutes ago, but the station was in a black out for most of the attack."

"So the cameras weren't recording." Tsukauchi clarified.

"No, sir."

Shouta looked at Tsukauchi and could tell he was thinking the exact same thing. The attack wasn't random, neither was the power outage. The entire thing had been engineered by someone who didn't want Hamasaki to talk to them. Shouta had been wrong. Whoever was behind the trigger operation was more powerful than he'd thought possible.

And the only lead he had was the symbol of evil.

Research

Chapter Summary

Izuku looks into online schools.

Chapter Notes

Have some fanart!

Izuku had spent the entire day so far researching online schools while Mom was at work. She'd tried to stay home, but she'd had to leave early yesterday because Izuku was too useless to stay out of trouble, so Izuku wasn't about to make her miss work *again* , just so he wouldn't be alone. Thankfully, she'd listened when he pointed out that he wouldn't be doing anything besides sitting on the couch all day, which he didn't need two arms for anyway, and she'd left after she made him promise to keep the door locked. He was just happy that he wasn't holding her back.

In any case, if he was able to transfer to online school, he'd have to get used to being home alone during the day, since Mom obviously couldn't afford to quit her job. There weren't that many online schools, and those that did exist were mostly some sort of mixed format where students still had to show up once a week. That would probably be better than going back to Aldera, since he would only have to deal with bullies occasionally, rather than everyday, but something told him Mom wouldn't see it that way.

The whole point of him going to an online school was so that he wouldn't have to deal with having classmates, so if he still had to attend classes, even infrequently, Mom would worry about how he was being treated. Izuku hated it when Mom had to worry about him. She didn't deserve having a garbage son like him, she deserved a son she could be proud of, a son with a quirk.

But that wasn't going to happen, so it was Izuku's responsibility to make sure she worried as little as possible. That meant that he couldn't just put up with weekly bullying, since Mom might not believe him if he lied and said his classmates were being nice. That left him to find a school that was entirely online. There were only two schools that did not require in-person attendance. One of them seemed almost like a traditional school, where students showed up in video-chat classrooms at set times and turned in homework every day just

like Izuku was used to at Aldera. There were two problems with that school, however. The first was that it seemed to include group projects, which might lead to Izuku being left out at best and cyberbullied at worst. The second was that it only accepted new students at the beginning of the semester, which meant that Izuku would have to stay at Aldera for several months until he was able to transfer. He couldn't do that to Mom.

That left Izuku with his final, and only, option. It apparently had options for everything from grade school until the end of high school and was entirely remote. According to their website, Izuku would just read articles and watch lectures associated with each lesson, then take tests and do assignments to test his learning. He would be able to work at his own pace, so he wouldn't have to worry about how stupid he was, he could just go slower than average. He did have to complete each semester class within six months, but that sounded like something he could handle. And Mom wouldn't have to worry about him having classmates that would bully him!

There was only one problem. He would have to pass an entrance exam.

He could take it at any time, so he wouldn't have to worry about going back to Aldera while he waited for the new semester to start, but...was Izuku really smart enough to pass? Kacchan didn't even get straight A's and he was so much smarter than Izuku! What if he took the test and didn't pass? Would he have to go back to Aldera? Mom would be so disappointed! He really was the worst son, wasn't he?

He ignored the voice in his head that said that Eraserhead thought he was smart. Eraser had just been being polite when he saw Izuku's notebook, there was no way he actually thought Izuku was intelligent. But Eraser wasn't worried about being polite, so he could be telling the truth…

Izuku shook his head. That was too confusing. It was just easier to firmly remind himself that he was an idiot, just like Kacchan and his teachers always said, and leave it at that. That way he wouldn't get his hopes up. When he inevitably failed out at the entrance exam, it would still hurt and Mom would still be worried, but at least he would already be expecting it. It was for the best.

Katsuki felt sick. The entire school was talking about how Deku got suspended. Boulders had been bragging about it all day, as had the

other two extras that had been involved, so everyone already knew how Deku had been beat up so badly that the principal had to call Auntie Inko to come pick him up. Glow had said it was his idea to pin the whole thing on Deku, like he was proud of his creative thinking, and the principal had fallen for it hook, line, and sinker.

But Deku couldn't have started that fight. Katsuki knew that, Auntie Inko knew that, and the principal sure as hell knew that. So why had the school gone along with Glow's story? Deku was a quirkless weakling who couldn't even defend himself, so why would he start a fight with his classmates? Sure, those extras didn't have awesome quirks like Katsuki's, but their weak-ass quirks were better than nothing, and Deku had those stalker notebooks, and he obviously knew he couldn't win, and even he wasn't stupid enough to pick a fight, so what did the school get from blaming Deku?

Well, those three extras who had beaten him up had gotten off scot-free. But it shouldn't matter to the school who got the punishment, right? They should be punishing those who were actually at fault, so that they knew they did something wrong. That's what heroes did, at least. They put the bad guys in prison so they wouldn't do anything bad in the future, even after they got out. Wasn't that the way things worked?

If the principal was letting these guys get away with what they did, then who else had he let get away with stuff? Were there villains out there who were out beating people up because the school hadn't done anything to stop them back when they went here? That was kinda messed up. It was a good thing that Katsuki knew better than to…

Katsku froze.

How much had *he* gotten away with? He had already had to come to terms with the fact that he hadn't been acting like a hero, but he hadn't been acting like a *villain* …right? The teachers all knew he wanted to be a hero! They all told him he'd be a good one! They wouldn't just do nothing if he'd been acting like a villain, not when they all knew he was going to be the next number one!

But he'd hurt Deku, and it was villains who hurt people. Not heroes. Not civilians. Villains. Villains hurt people. He hurt people. He was a villain.

Katsuki couldn't keep himself from exploding his pencil, but the only reprimand he got was a stern look from the teacher for interrupting

class. Katsuki couldn't help but wonder what would have happened to Deku if he'd done something like that, obviously not exploding his pencil, because he didn't have a quirk to do that, but if he'd been loud? He'd probably have gotten detention at the very least.

Why had no one ever given him detention? The school hadn't even done anything when he'd...when he'd told Deku to....Katsuki crushed the charred remainders of the pencil. The teachers heard those extras telling Deku to kill himself every damn day, but they still didn't do anything. How long had Katsuki been a villain without realizing it?

He couldn't trust his teachers, not anymore. How was he supposed to be the best if they wouldn't even tell him what he was doing wrong? He had to be better! He had to change and actually act like a hero if he was ever going to be the best! And he *was* going to be the best. He was going to be the best hero, no matter what stupid challenges got in his way, no matter how much he had to change, no matter if those stupid teachers couldn't be bothered to do their fucking jobs, Katsuki was going to be the best!

But how?

Jun Hamasaki woke up chained to a table. Immediately, he started pulling at the chains and even tried cutting them with his claws, but without any trigger in his system, there was no way he'd be getting out. What happened? He'd been at the police station, then there had been alarms and that detective had left alongside the hero who arrested him, then another officer had come in and opened a tiny bottle with a single mechanical...

He groaned. He knew the symbol of evil, whoever he was, was powerful enough to have some dirty cops on his side. He should have known that they wouldn't leave him in police custody, he knew too much. It probably didn't even matter that he'd said anything, they still would have dragged him back here anyway.

Speaking of, where exactly was *here?* It would have been easier to just kill him, inject him with a poison rather than a sedative, but instead they'd kept him alive. Well, as long as this wasn't the place they did their experiments, he'd be fine.

The door creaked open and Jun craned his neck to try and get a better look at either the room or his visitor, but unfortunately, aside from a bright lamp over his head, the rest of the room was dark. There was some shuffling in the general direction of the door, then he heard a

high-pitched squeaking that set his teeth on edge, almost like someone had forgotten to oil the wheels on one of those old metal wagons.

The comparison wasn't too far off, apparently, because his visitor finally stepped into the light pushing an old metal cart loaded with a variety of tools and bottles that Jun didn't want to know the uses of. His blood ran cold as he realized the man was wearing large round glasses and a lab coat. *The doctor.*

The doctor took a voice recorder from his pocket and pressed a button, "Phase three, experiment two. Hypothesis: through a combination of mutation and trigger, an elevated quirk level can be achieved even after the drug is out of the system."

"P-please, d-don't do this." Jun didn't care that pulling at the chains hadn't worked before. He couldn't be turned into...it didn't matter if none of the others remembered the actual experimentation, he didn't want to...this couldn't be happening!

The doctor didn't seem to care about his pleas, though, since he picked up a thick syringe off the cart and moved to stand over the table, the light reflecting off his thick round glasses so Jun couldn't see his eyes, "Time of first injection: 8:24 pm."

New Beginnings

Chapter Summary

Izuku takes his entrance exam for online school.

Izuku had spent the last week cramming non-stop for his entrance exam. He still wasn't entirely confident in his ability to pass, but he'd reached the point in his studying where he was starting to forget more than he learned, which probably meant that he should just take the exam, even if he'd inevitably fail. At least then he'd be able to move on and put his eggs in other baskets.

Mom was at work and had left that morning after giving him a kiss on the cheek and wishing him luck on his test. She had promised him Katsudon that evening as well, either as a congratulatory meal or as comfort food, it would depend on how Izuku thought he did. Izuku didn't really see the point of her going through all that trouble for him, but there was a selfish part of him that was just so happy that she cared. He wished that part didn't feel so good. It made the rest of him feel worse.

Just before noon, Izuku finally put his books to the side and went to the school's website, clicking on the tab that would take him to the entrance exam. He spent about half an hour filling out his basic information, like his name, what other schools he'd gone to, his gpa for the last year, etc, cursing the fact that his cast made it so hard to type. He could still move his fingers, but his entire arm itched and started to ache if he used it too much, so at least for the next few days, he'd be stuck chicken-pecking at the keyboard. It was annoying.

Finally, he reached the welcome screen and read through the instructions. The test itself was 200 questions, and he had three hours to complete it. Izuku glanced at the clock. It was 12:00, which meant that he had until 3:00 to finish the exam. That would mean he had just under a minute to answer each question, but that didn't count the time that he'd have to use to check over his answers at the end. Izuku took one last shaky breath before clicking the button that said: *Start Exam.*

The questions were deceptively easy. Izuku had assumed that he'd have to rush to complete each question in under a minute, but he was able to answer most questions almost instantly, which gave him more time on the more difficult questions, like the ones in the math section.

If Izuku wasn't freaking out about the fact that his entire future depended on him doing well on this test, he'd almost say it was...fun? Was that weird? He could almost hear Kacchan telling him that he was a damn nerd.

Before he knew it, Izuku had answered every single question. He sighed in releif and looked at the clock, it was now 1:25, which meant he still had...wait a minute. Izuku felt a cold wave of anxiety wash over him. How long did he have again? Izuku knew it had a three in it, but did that mean he had three hours? Or was it one hour, thirty minutes? How long was he supposed to spend? He couldn't have finished in under half the time, so it must have just been an hour and a half, which meant that he only had…

Izuku looked over at the clock again and started freaking out. It was 1:28! He only had two minutes! He didn't have any time to look over his answers! But if he didn't look over his answers, he wouldn't have a chance to change any of his answers, which meant he had no chance of passing! Unless he really *did* have a full three hours, but if he didn't have a full three hours and tried to go back and check his answers, then he'd miss the deadline and fail by default! But if he didn't check his answers, then he wouldn't pass! How long did he have? Was it three hours or an hour and a half?!

Izuku glanced at the clock one last time. 1:29! It was better safe than sorry, right? Wasn't it better to get half the questions wrong than turn it in late? Izuku flailed as he scrambled to press submit, then frantically froze as he realized what he'd just done. What had he just done?! This was terrible! He hadn't even checked any of his answers!

His eyes stung as he tried to hold back his tears. It looked like Mom's katsudon was going to be a comfort meal, afterall.

Shouta curled up in the corner of the staff room at lunch and scrolled through the obituaries. He vaguely knew that he was just making things worse for himself, but he couldn't help checking every day, a sick sense of dread deep in his stomach as he desperately hoped that he wouldn't recognize any of the photos. Not that he'd ever seen Viridian without the mask, but he knew that the kid was young and had green hair. Plus, the fact that suicide would be listed as the cause of death would be a dead giveaway.

When the kid hadn't shown his face for a few days, Shouta had hoped that he'd finally taken some time off to heal from some of his injuries.

He'd thought that maybe the kid had actually grown a small sense of self-preservation, but that only went so far, and it had now been over a week since Shouta had seen Viridian. He'd even checked with Amplifier and Rock Lock, but neither of them had seen him, and Tsukauchi said that no one matching Viridian's description had been found dead from a villain fight. Even some of the other nocturnal heroes were starting to ask about the missing problem child, and they didn't even run into Viridian that often in the first place!

Shouta really hoped that Viridian's sudden disappearance didn't mean anything, that maybe the kid's parents had somehow found out about his nightly activities and that they had forced him to stop, or maybe that he had just gotten bored, but deep down, he knew that wasn't the case. The problem child had thrown himself headfirst into vigilantism to the point where he had become entrenched in the city's hero scene in only a few months, and the kid seemed to enjoy it, so Shouta couldn't imagine that he'd ever give that up, not unless...unless…

He shook his head and put away his phone. It wouldn't do any good to worry himself into exhaustion. The most he could do was keep an eye on the obituaries and hope to every deity he knew that Viridian hadn't decided that suicide by villain was taking too long. Maybe he was just reading too far into things and Viridian's mental health wasn't nearly as bad it seemed and he was just out of town. But if he was just out of town, then why hadn't he given any warning before disappearing?

Shouta groaned and stretched as he emerged from his cocoon to get ready for his next class. Thankfully, his current class had responded well to his logical ruse, and he hadn't had to permanently expel that many of them, so he still had quite a few students who were actually showing promise now that they were taking things seriously. He just needed to remind himself that he had more than enough brats to worry about without fretting about the problem child. Didn't make things any easier, but it was the most logical course of action.

"Hey, Shouta!" Mic's yell made him flinch and wish he'd actually gotten a nap. "You look like a mess, is something on your mind?"

"Doesn't he always look like a mess?" Snipe asked. "What's the difference?"

Shouta glared at him while Midnight struggled to hold back laughter.

"I can't explain it." Mic insisted. "But Shouta has his normal dishevelment and his anxious dishevelment, and today, it looks like

he's worried about something. Is one of your students giving you trouble?"

"Not one of my official ones." Shouta muttered, but it didn't seem like anyone heard him.

"Oh, are you gonna expel someone else?" Ectoplasm asked. "Dang, I'm gonna lose the bet."

Shouta glared at them, "You shouldn't bet about how likely I am to expel my students."

"We're not betting on if you'll expel your students!" Mic yelled.

"No, we're betting on *when* you'll expel your students." Midnight added helpfully.

Shouta groaned, "If you must know, I'm worried about something on my patrol. There's just a vigilante that's been hanging around and I haven't seen him for a while. I'm just hoping nothing's happened to him, that all."

Midnight grinned, "Aww! I knew you had a heart! What are you gonna do?"

"There's not much I *can* do." Shouta grumbled. "Damn problem child."

"Well," Mic said, "when he shows his face again, ground him. That'll teach him to mess with you!"

Shouta rolled his eyes and ignored the sick sense of worry in his stomach that just wouldn't go away. He wished that he'd noticed Viridian's depression sooner. Maybe if he'd caught it before the kid had disappeared, he could have convinced the kid to get some therapy. Even if Viridian refused to go, Shouta still could have found some way to help so that the kid didn't feel like he had to...Well, he just hoped it wasn't too late.

But one thing was sure, if by some miracle, Viridian was still alive, Shouta wouldn't make the same mistake twice.

After changing out of his school clothes, Katsuki walked to the address he'd found on the internet. The building was plain, just a community center with a shitty playground off to one side and a couple of rooms for art classes and support groups, but he ignored them for right now

and walked to the front desk. The lady behind it smiled at him as she waited for him to find the words. Stupid...why was this so hard?!

“Um, I was wondering,” Katsuki cringed, he was practically stuttering almost like Deku, “I was wondering if there was a hero named Amplifier here? I read on your website that…”

The receptionist nodded, “Sure thing! Amplifier!” She called back into the offices behind her. “You got a visitor!”

“Awesome!” Amplifier was a lot... *bouncier* than Katuski had been expecting. Considering the program that the website said she ran, he’d been expecting her to look a lot more intimidating. “What can I do for you kid?”

Katsuki’s mouth went dry and the only thing that kept him from running out the door was the fact that he wasn’t some shitty coward, “You’re the fucker that runs the rehabilitation group for villains on probation, right?”

Amplifier blinked a few times before she grinned, “That’s me! We meet once a week and focus on rehabilitation and personal development. It’s been really effective and we have a meeting starting in just a few minutes, but then you probably already know that, considering that you’re here. Do you have a note from your probation officer?”

“I’m not a fucking…” Katsuki forced himself to calm down, “I’m not on probation. Your website said you could use a couple extra hands, so,” he took a deep breath, “I wanna volunteer.”

Progress

Chapter Summary

Izuku starts online school.

Izuku blinked rapidly, half-convinced that he was reading the words wrong. A 96% on the entrance exam? How...how was that even possible? There must have been some mistake, right? Izuku was too dumb to be able to ace the entire entrance exam when he hadn't even had time to do it twice! But..there was Izuku's name at the top of the email, clear as day, and the letter had arrived in his inbox, so it must be for him…

"Mom!" He yelled so that she could hear him from the kitchen. "Can you come here? I need to make sure I'm reading this right!"

Mom nearly slid down the hall in her hurry to open his bedroom door, "What is it, Izuku? What's wrong?"

Izuku simply leaned back and pointed to the screen. He held his breath as Mom leaned over to read the email. He didn't know what he was even hoping for. He didn't want to get his hopes up, because there wasn't any way he'd passed, but if Mom read the same thing he did…

"Oh, Izuku!" Mom turned to him with tears in her eyes that were at odds with the brilliant smile on her face. "Congratulations! You got in! I knew you could do it!"

Izuku continued staring at the screen in shock as Mom sank to her knees and hugged him, "I..I got in. I got in!"

Mom chuckled as he hugged him even tighter, "You did! This is going to be so good for you, Izuku! I'll call Aldera first thing in the morning and do the paperwork. Oh! This calls for a celebration, do you want to go out?"

Izuku shook his head and held up his cast, "I, uh, don't want to risk running into anyone."

Mom's eyes shone in understanding, "How about some ice cream, then? I can go pick some up while you register for your classes."

Izuku nodded and Mom smiled and ruffled his hair before she left.

Izuku turned back to the email and clicked on the link to sign up for classes. The first step was to make sure he was registered for all the required classes, such as science, math, and literature. Then he had to take one foreign language class, so he ended up registering for English, since that was what the school recommended.

The problem was that he also had to take three elective classes, but...Izuku had never really had any hobbies outside of being a hero, which obviously wasn't going to happen. He frowned as he scrolled through his options. Art might be fine, it would help make his notebooks more detailed, if nothing else, so he added that class before he could start to doubt himself. But that still left two classes.

He was most of the way down the list of electives by the time another class caught his eye. *Quirk Theory* . That could be interesting! Analyzing quirks was one of his favorite parts of watching hero fights, and Eraserhead had mentioned that analyzing villains' quirks would help him fight better, so it wouldn't hurt to learn more about them! But, that still left one final elective. He should probably choose something to do with a hobby, but Izuku really didn't have any hobbies outside of being a vigilante, and somehow he didn't think that his new school would let him count that as an elective.

Thinking of his vigilantism made Izuku restless. It had been almost a week and a half since he'd gone out and he was really starting to miss it. His body had gotten used to waking up in the middle of the night, so he was spending a few hours every night just staring at the ceiling and reminding himself that Mom would never forgive him if he somehow managed to re-break his arm, and that if he did, then he'd have to explain *how* he'd broken it again, and that would just make her worry too much.

His only consolation about the whole thing was that he knew that none of the heroes were missing him. In fact, they were probably just grateful that he was staying out of the way, and he knew he was being selfish for wanting to feel useful again, but...he just wished there was some way he could still help while he was healing. It would be amazing if he had a quirk that let him see the streets remotely, then he could just call the heroes and send them to where they were needed. It didn't even have to be a quirk! If he even had some sort of drone he could fly without being suspicious, or even just some sort of camera…

Izuku sat straight up. Security cameras! Why hadn't he thought of that before? They were all over the city, and sure, they didn't cover every

alleyway, but they had to be better than nothing! It was probably completely useless, since there was no way that a deku like him would be able to become good enough at hacking to be able to access the city's security cameras without getting caught, but...well, he needed another elective anyway and programing would be a good skill for the future.

He found a class on programming basics and signed up just as Mom arrived with the ice cream. He knew he shouldn't get his hopes up, it would only hurt that much more when everything went wrong again.

Shouta was struggling to focus on his investigation. Really, he hadn't known viridian for that long, so why should he be this affected by the fact that he...disappeared. He just disappeared. Shouta didn't have any evidence to the contrary and it was completely illogical to assume the worst possible outcome. But he also didn't want to keep his hopes up, only for the kid to have been dead the whole time, just like…

Well, he should be getting back to work. There had been more and more cases of instant villains the last few weeks, and the last time this had happened, it had been followed by the next level villains. It was almost as though whoever was behind the villain factory was gauging potential for villains the same way he did for heroes.

Which led to the next major mystery. Before his disappearance, Hamasaki had said something about the symbol of evil. The phrase tickled at the back of Shouta's brain, like he'd read it somewhere before, but hadn't paid any attention to it, but try as he might, he just couldn't remember the significance of the epitaph. It seemed to have some significance to Tskuauchi, but when Shouta had pressed him for answers, he'd simply said that it wasn't important. He'd said that it couldn't be the man he thought it was, because that one was already dead and had been for years. Shouta just hoped he was imagining the way that Tsukauchi had gone pale during the conversation.

It was frustrating. The biggest lead they'd ever gotten about the villain factory, and it was a dead end. So what next? It just wasn't practical to put every single trigger user in protective custody in case the factory started abducting again, so they were on the back foot until the villains made another move. If only they knew what kinds of quirks appealed to the villain factory. Shouta knew that it wasn't necessarily strong quirks, because they had a lot of ways to strengthen them artificially, but there didn't seem to be any common denominator in the victims who got abducted and those that didn't.

If only the kid were still...of course, even if he was alive, it wouldn't be fair to bring him into such a dangerous investigation. Even if he was a vigilante, he was still a semi-suicidal teenager who wasn't prepared to deal with the danger that came from investigations like this. But still, the kid had a talent for quirk analysis. He hadn't been able to spend a lot of time with the notebook, but from what he'd read, he had a sneaking suspicion that if anyone could figure out how the villain factory was picking their victims, it was Viridian.

If Katuski didn't know he was the best, he might be tempted to think he was an idiot. Seriously, how hadn't he noticed how messed up Aldera was? Were their teachers secretly villains or something? Because that was kinda the only explanation Katsuki could think of that would explain how they willfully ignored kids getting beat up right in front of them.

And that wasn't even getting into the verbal bullying that happened right in the middle of class. The teachers didn't ignore that, but Katsuki thought ignoring it would be preferable to what they were doing. They seemed to be actively creating opportunities for the students to make fun of the less popular students, and often joined in the mockery by publicly shaming students for tiny offenses that wouldn't even get Katsuki a sideways glance.

It was messed up. But what was even more messed up was that Katuski didn't know how to stop it. He was supposed to be the best, but he wasn't about to pretend that he had any sort of moral authority here. He'd bullied Deku and all those other extras for years, so he couldn't just turn around and tell others to stop.

Why had he even stopped? It had taken Deku literally saving his life to even get him to lay off the nerd, not that he'd ever forgive Deku for that, but still...he'd fucked up way too badly to say anything now.

The best that he could do was stop acting like a villain. He'd thought it was pretty clever to volunteer at that villain rehabilitation group. Volunteering and shit always looked good on hero school applications, and maybe he'd even be able to learn something or some shit without jeopardizing his clean record. Not that he deserved a clean record, but...he *needed* to be a hero. He wasn't about to let his idiot teachers ruin his chances at being the number one hero just because they couldn't be bothered to do their fucking jobs.

That Amplifier bitch had sent him home with some paperwork to do,

but he'd be attending the next meeting. He'd just have to deal with being in the same room with villains without exploding them on sight. Katsuki glanced over at his teacher, who was correcting essays while Fingers scratched at that one kid who could make bubbles.

At least he was getting some practice.

Responsibility

Chapter Summary

> Katsuki begins volunteering with the villain rehabilitation program.

Deku wasn't coming back.

That was what their shitty-ass villain of a teacher had announced at the beginning of homeroom. He said that Deku had decided to transfer schools, and Katsuki could only hope that was really what happened instead of it being a cover story for if Izuku had really…

Katsuki shook his head and forced himself to keep walking toward the community center. If Deku had killed himself, his old hag would have told him. Her and Auntie Inko had always been close, so if Deku was dead, he'd be one of the first to know. He had to be alive. Katuski didn't know what he'd do if that damn nerd had really followed his messed up *advice.*

The rehabilitation group met in one of the larger rooms of the community center. Amplifier was already setting up chairs in a big circle when he arrived. She looked up when she heard the door open and smiled as brightly as Deku did. Katskuki scowled, the last thing he needed today was more reminders of the damn nerd.

"Hey Bakugo!" She yelled cheerfully. "Right on time. Can you finish setting up these chairs while I grab some water?"

Katsuki didn't bother responding, figuring that the way he moved to grab a few of the chairs stacked against the wall was answer enough. Amplifier seemed to agree, given that she immediately left the room and let him do his thing. He didn't know exactly how many chairs to set up, but the group couldn't be that big, so after there were about twenty chairs out, he leaned against the wall and crossed his arms to wait.

Amplifier came back a few minutes later carrying a large water jug that she set on the table next to him, "Alright, that's about it. Pretty low maintenance set up, don't you think?"

Katuski didn't really know what to say to that, so he just nodded. The villain extras were starting to filter in, so Amplifier left to go chat with

them while Katsuki pretended to stare at the floor, even though he was really just observing the people he'd supposedly volunteered to help or something like that. He had a feeling Amplifier knew what he was doing, but he didn't really care what that bitch thought.

The people coming into the room didn't match what Katuski had always been taught about villains, so that was just one more way his teachers had failed at their jobs, he guessed. Aside from the little tracking bracelets around their ankles, the villains looked relatively normal, nothing like the incarnations of evil that the news made them out to be. But maybe it was just because these were nobodies, not ranked villains. Or maybe they were just good at hiding who they really were, who knew?

One of them, some guy with weird little tentacles instead of hair, caught his eye and smiled at him, but Katsuki simply scowled and turned away. He wasn't here to make friends with this scum, he was here to learn how not to be so scummy himself. Besides, villains weren't good people. They couldn't be nice.

Right?

It only took a few minutes before everyone was there and most of the seats were filled. Amplifier smiled and skipped to the front of the room, "Hello everyone, welcome back!"

"Who's the kid?" Some big guy with horns and green skin said gruffly.

Amplifier grinned, "Oh, this is Bakugo! He's gonna be helping me out for the next little while."

There was a round of nods and welcomes from the villains, which Katsuki mostly ignored.

"Why'd you decide to volunteer to help a bunch of villains?" A weird girl with pigtails asked loudly.

Katsuki made a face that would normally send Deku running as he stared her down, "None of your fucking business!"

There was a long moment of silence before the group erupted into laughter. The weird girl grinned, "Oh, I *like* him!"

"Yeah," the big-horned villain slapped his knee, "he's gonna fit in just fine!"

Katsuki stared at them like they'd gone crazy, then glanced at Amplifier, who was smiling at him like he'd done something great, which was what pushed him over the edge, "Shut up! I don't need your shitty approval!"

"Where'd you find this kid?" One of the other villains asked. "He's great!"

Amplifier's grin got bigger, "He came to me. Don't worry, you're gonna have plenty of time to get to know him, but let's get started. Anybody want to share how their week went?"

The cheerful mood dropped like a rock and the assorted villains became very busy looking at the floor. Katuski frowned. If it was just one or two that had a bad week, he'd get it, but all of them? Had there been something specific that happened, or…?

The big-horned villain finally spoke up, "My girl friend's family came to visit for the first time since we started dating. They're from a little town and I guess Hina didn't tell them about my quirk because they...well, they're the type of people that don't like mutant types. It's one thing getting called Frankenstein by little kids, they don't mean anything by it, they just think it's cool I've got green skin, but when adults say it, it's malicious. I managed to keep things civil until they left, but their stupid passive-agressive comments really made me want to shoot someone."

Amplifier nodded in understanding, "That must have been hard, facing disrimination from people who you were probably hoping would like you. I'm proud of you for holding out, though, and I hope things get better."

"Fat chance." Someone muttered. Katsuki frowned. Was...was discrimination really that big of an issue?

"I'll go next." The tentacle haired villain offered. "My mom was trying to get on my case about finding a job, even though I've told her there's no point. No one will hire me until I complete this rehabilitation course and get my arrest record wiped, but she doesn't seem to understand that. Normally, I'd just go out with friends and ignore her, but my old friends are part of why I'm in this mess in the first place, so…"

"That sucks man," Weird Pigtails said, "I'm kinda in the same boat. If I really want to become an *upstanding citizen* ," her tone was met with a round of laughs, "I have to find entirely new friends. It doesn't seem

worth it sometimes."

Katsuki's frown deepened as the villains kept sharing their stories. If they weren't facing obstacles because of their villain status, it was because of their quirks or their gender. It was just so foregn to him. Was this what other people experienced? Katsuki hadn't ever had anyone judge him like that. Sometimes they thought it was weird that he was so angry, but as soon as they learned what his quirk was, they just wrote it off. It just seemed wrong that their experiences were so different.

After everyone who wanted to had had a chance to share, Amplifier began talking about what the villain extras were supposed to be learning about this week, "Today we're going to be learning to accept responsibility for our actions. There will always be circumstances beyond our control, but it's helpful to realize that not everything is someone else's fault."

"Yeah," Tentacles grinned, "Everything happens for a reason, and sometimes that reason is that you're an idiot."

That drew a laugh from everyone and even Katuski found himself chuckling.

"Pretty much!" Amplifier said cheerfully. "But, really, recognizing that sometimes things are your own fault goes hand in hand with realizing that you can become better. This isn't about beating yourself up, it's about realizing that if you broke it, you can fix it."

Katsuki thought about that. His teachers definitely hadn't done him any favors in teaching him the right way to act, but they hadn't told him to beat Deku up. They hadn't done anything to stop it, but ultimately, it was his own decision to bully Deku and the other weak-ass extras. Katsuki swallowed the...was it guilt? Was that what he was feeling? But Amplifier said he wasn't supposed to beat himself up, however tempting that seemed right then, so what now?

He couldn't fix it. At least, he didn't feel like he could. He couldn't go back in time and be less of a jerk. He couldn't erase the fact that he'd told Deku to jump off a roof. None of that was ever going to go away, no matter how much he changed. Was there even a point to this, or was he just going to be a bully and a villain forever?

Eventually, the class ended and everyone got up to get water and socialize before heading home. Katsuki was so lost in his own guilt that he almost didn't realize that the tentacle-haired guy had come to

lean against the wall right next to him.

“Hey, dude. I’m Aito Ogawa, nice to meet you.”

Katsuki simply scoffed and tried to ignore him, but the guy wouldn’t take a hint.

“It’s pretty cool how you’re volunteering and stuff.” Ogawa said. “And I’m glad I’m not the new guy here anymore.”

Katsuki couldn’t help wondering how a nice guy like this became a villain, when an assole like him was on track to become a villain. Maybe he was just really petty and manipulative or something like that…

“If you’ve got something to ask, just ask it.” Ogawa grinned. “Don’t be shy.”

“I’m not fucking shy!” Katsuki growled. “I was just wondering what the fuck you did you get arrested. You don’t seem like the type.”

Ogawa chuckled, “Thanks for the compliment…I think?” He looked out at the room and sighed. “My sister started running with the wrong crowd a few years ago, and I always thought her friends were so cool, so I started hanging out with people like them. I got arrested a few weeks ago for going on a rampage with a few others after we got dosed with an experimental version of trigger. It wasn’t our fault, so normally it wouldn’t have put me on probation or anything, but,” he grimaced, “I happened to have an outstanding warrant for shoplifting when they took me in.”

Katuski scoffed, “Everything happens for a reason, huh?”

Ogawa smiled sheepishly, “Yeah, and I’m an idiot. I’m just lucky this program exists, cause otherwise I’d be screwed.”

“They’ll really wipe your arrest record if you come to this?” Katsuki asked.

He nodded, “I think it’s supposed to be a way to limit the number of villains. If they try to rehabilitate those of us who aren’t too far gone, then it frees up the heroes to go after the real bad guys, right?”

Katsuki shrugged. It made a certain type of sense.

“Well, Bakugo, it was nice meeting you, whatever your reasons are for

being here.” Ogawa smiled and waved as he pushed himself away from the wall. “See you next week!”

Katsuki grunted and watched him leave. He had a lot to think about.

Knowledge

Chapter Summary

Izuku makes some progress in his online classes.

Izuku was starting to wonder if maybe Eraserhead had been telling the truth when he said that he was smart. He had just been doing his assignments like he normally did, but because he could submit them multiple times, he'd decided that it would be best to submit the first time, get a preliminary score, and then correct what was wrong after, but...there wasn't much to correct. When he was at Aldera, he'd been changing half his answers because he'd been convinced he couldn't be right, but either his online assignments were way easier than the stuff he'd been doing or he needed to learn to trust himself more, because he was consistently getting higher scores than he'd gotten since preschool in less than half the time!

His favorite class was his quirk theory elective. It was really easy, since they were basically testing him on common sense, but they'd linked him to a lot of really cool articles that explained why quirks worked the way they did. Izuku had to keep himself from getting distracted and reading all the articles in the bibliographies of his assigned readings, because he really couldn't afford to waste any time. He couldn't help it! It was interesting!

He was also enjoying his programming class. It was a new way of thinking, but it was a fun challenge, like solving a puzzle! In the last two weeks since he'd officially begun online classes, his vigilante time had gradually turned into his programming time. When he'd wake up in the middle of the night, instead of restlessly trying to get back to sleep, he would get up and do his programming homework until he got tired. Most nights, he would spend an hour or two researching extra resources on hacking specifically, since that obviously wasn't covered in depth in a beginning programming class, but Izuku felt like he was actually starting to get the hang of it!

He was currently in the middle of taking a test for quirk theory. It was taking longer than he thought it would, but then again, he hadn't really paid attention to the introduction that said how long the test would take. It seemed to be cumulative, whereas most of the other tests he'd taken had only asked questions about the most recent unit, but Izuku saw the logic of occasionally testing old material. He figured that as long as he was done by the time Mom called him for dinner, it

wasn't that big of a deal.

It was almost two hours later by the time he finally submitted the test and stretched out his sore muscles, ignoring the way his arm itched beneath the cast. At least he was healed enough that he was able to type again, his programming class would be much harder if he was still having to do everything one handed. Izuku glanced at the clock. He still had about twenty minutes until dinner, so he may as well get a head start on the next unit.

Izuku scrolled to the bottom of the page and frowned when he realized that the *next page* button was nowhere to be found. That was strange. Normally, when he finished one assignment, he just pressed the button and it took him to the next one. Maybe he had to go back to the index page for the whole class? That seemed needlessly complicated, but Izuku didn't want to question the website designers, so he clicked to the overview tab and scrolled past everything that said *complete* so he could figure out what unit was next, only to reach the bottom of the page.

Izuku did a double take.

Had...had the test he'd just taken been the final? That would explain why the whole thing had been cumulative and why it had taken so long, but...he *really* needed to pay more attention to what he was doing, that was so embarrassing! But, sure enough, there was a little checkmark by the final exam, stating that he'd completed it just a few minutes ago. Was he just really far ahead in that class, or....?

He clicked through his other classes, his eyes widening a little more every time he realized that he was only one or two a unit or less from completing a class. The only exception was art, but that was because it took him so long to draw every assignment. How had he finished them so fast?

Izuku closed his laptop and frowned. He supposed it made sense. He didn't have anything else to do while he healed besides work on his homework, and he wasn't too tired from running around as Viridian to stay awake in class. Or maybe it was because he wasn't worried about his bullies stealing his books or beating him up after class? That had been a constant in his life ever since he turned four, so he hadn't really realized how distracting it was until he didn't have to worry about it anymore. It was kinda nice.

He felt strangely guilty about feeling so grateful though. Maybe if he

were stronger, he would have been able to deal with the bullying without letting it affect his grades, but instead he had just run away like a coward. He really was a deku, huh? It was a good thing he'd given up on being a hero, because heroes weren't cowards. They didn't run away.

It was a good thing vigilantes did.

Izuku shook his head and went out into the kitchen, where Mom was setting the table. She smiled as he came in, "Hi, baby! How were your classes today?"

Izuku shrugged, "I think I need to pay more attention, because I could have sworn when I registered that each class was the equivalent of one semester, but I finished one of them today, so they have to be shorter than that. I think they're just quarter classes."

"Still, it's impressive that you're already done, Izuku!" Mom said proudly. "I'm glad you're doing so well, baby. You seem a lot happier."

Izuku shrugged. He was still a deku, still useless, but at least going to school online meant that Mom didn't need to worry about him, so it was worth it. If him leaving Aldera meant that she was happy, then it was worth it, no matter if it meant he was a coward for running away from his problems.

The only thing that could make her happier was if she didn't have to deal with him at all, but there was nothing Izuku could hope to do about that until he was able to go out as Viridian again.

Shouta was so tired. It wasn't surprising, considering that tired was his default state, but the last few weeks had pushed his normal *tired* into *exhausted.* There had been at least two instant villains a week, and trigger sales were booming in accordance with the marketing, so Shouta was neck deep in problems and interrogations as he tried to make headway on the case. To make things worse, Viridian was still missing.

At least he wasn't the only one worried over the vigilante's sudden absence. Amplifier and Rock Lock had promised to tell him immediately if they ever caught sight of him, and a lot of other heroes in surrounding areas were starting to keep an eye out just in case he'd just switched neighborhoods. Shouta still couldn't help himself from checking the obituaries, but thankfully, that still hadn't turned

anything up. He just hoped that, wherever Viridian was, he was safe and taking care of himself. Actually, him taking care of himself was probably too much to hope for, considering the kid's mental state, so Shouta would be happy to settle for him being safe.

He was currently at home on his day off, doing an internet deep dive for anything regarding the symbol of evil. When he'd mentioned the lead to Mic the other day, he'd said that he'd seen it on some conspiracy theory message boards, so that's what Shouta was currently reading. Most of the theories were completely insane, with mad leaps of logic, but each of them was based on small kernels of truth that could be useful eventually.

Finally, he caught sight of what he was looking for. It was a post from a few years ago, but had a very substantial thread attached where other people had shared their evidence and experiences. Now to sort the evidence from the bullshit.

The Symbol of Evil, also known as All for One, is widely considered to be an urban legend that was popularized around the dawn of quirks. The story goes that All for One was a man that could take one person's quirk and give it to another person, a skill that he used to gain a cult following in the substantial chaos of the time. The story is often discounted as wishful thinking of quirkless people who wanted quirks, or of quirked individuals who experienced bigotry and persecution because of their quirks.

But what if it wasn't?

The assumption definitely makes sense! But most legends are based on real events that people just didn't understand, or that got twisted by the years and countless retellings. Considering how widely known this "legend" was during the dawn of quirks and how quickly it spread, there had to be quite a bit of truth to it, truth that perhaps has been discounted or hidden by the hero commission to hide the truth of the nightmare that might still be in our midst…

Return

Chapter Summary

Viridian's back, baby!

Izuku squinted in the darkness of his room as he slowly switched between different camera feeds. He was feeling more confident in his hacking abilities ever since he completed his programming class, so instead of just looking up hacking videos on youtube like he normally did during his vigilante time, Izuku decided to try hacking into some security cameras. It had taken just over half an hour to make his way into the system, but that was partially because he had to set everything up so that he wouldn't get caught. If the police figured out that he was Viridian, then they'd prevent him from going out on the streets when he got better and that would mess up all of Izuku's plans, so he needed to make sure the hack was untraceable to hide his identity.

He was kind of worried that he would have to hack into each camera individually, but once he'd gained access to the city's security system, it was pretty easy to just switch cameras around the city. He obviously didn't have access to privately owned cameras like the ones stores put in, but baby steps. Izuku wasn't really planning to do anything besides get into the system, honestly, but as he was getting some practice switching between cameras, he saw a woman get roughly pulled into an alley and he couldn't just do nothing!

It was probably the adrenaline combined with the fact that he'd already made his computer untraceable that let him hack into the hero comm link so fast. He put in his headphones, grateful that they had a mic attached, and quickly double checked where the issue was. What hero was the closest?

Shouta scanned the streets below him, searching for any signs of the drug dealers he was supposed to be catching, only to come up empty. After Hamasaki's capture and subsequent disappearance, most of the larger dealers had gone to ground. The only ones that Shouta had been able to find were small fry, but he already knew they wouldn't be of any help to his investigation.

It also didn't help that he'd been distracted recently. It had been weeks now, and it was looking more and more like Viridan wasn't

coming back. Shouta knew that the problem child wasn't one of his students, so he didn't *technically* have any responsibility for the kid, but it still felt like he'd failed, or like he should have done more to help him. If only he'd realized that the kid was suicidal earlier, he might have been able to…

He was startled out of his thoughts by a soft click in his ear that indicated that his comm link had opened, followed by silence. Shouta frowned. He was an independent hero, so the only people who would normally talk to him over comms would be the police or sometimes other heroes requesting backup, but it would be nice if they'd actually talk to him! He could hear someone breathing on the other end, so he knew it wasn't just his imagination, but who was it and what did they need?

"Hello?" Shouta couldn't help the annoyance that found its way into his voice. "I can hear you breathing, stop wasting my time."

There was silence for another long moment before a familiar young voice blurted out, "Imagine I'm throwing a marble."

Shouta felt himself melt from sheer relief, "Viridian? Is that you?"

He hadn't even realized how much tension he'd been holding until he heard the kid's voice. The kid was alive. He was alright. He was alive.

Izuku was trying not to panic. When he'd decided to hack into the hero comms, he hadn't thought of what he was going to say! Eraserhead was the closest hero to the alleyway he'd seen, but if Eraser suddenly heard a random voice in his ear, he would freak out and think it was a villain! Izuku wasn't supposed to have access to the comm link!

Apparently, it was at that moment that Izuku's brain apparently decided that filters were overrated, because all that he could think to blurt out was something about marbles, since that was how he normally got heroes' attention when he was out on the street. Eraser probably thought he was a complete idiot and was probably really annoyed with him for wasting his time and hacking into the comm link, but at least it had worked...right? Eraser had sounded oddly relieved when he said Izuku's vigilante name, probably because it confirmed that a villain hadn't somehow gotten access to the comm link.

"I'm so sorry, Eraserhead, I know that I shouldn't have hacked into the

comm link and I'm really sorry for wasting your time, oh, and for punching you in the face that one time, and…"

Eraser cut off his rambling apology, "It's fine, kid. Are you ok?"

Izuku frowned in confusion, "Yes? Why wouldn't I be ok?"

There was a beat of silence before Eraser spoke again, "I thought that maybe…"

Izuku suddenly remembered why he'd hacked into the comm link in the first place, "There's a shady guy that pulled a woman into the alley behind the boutique on Lake Street! Oh no! I'm so sorry Eraserhead, you were saying something and I interrupted you and…"

Eraser just grunted in response, most likely already running to the alley, "Did you catch sight of the guy's quirk?"

"Um," Izuku thought back to the footage and glanced at the camera in question again, no one had come out of the alley yet, "no. I didn't get a good look at him and he didn't have a mutant quirk, so it was a little difficult to tell what it was without seeing it in action. I'm sorry."

"It's fine, kid. Where have you been? We've been worried about you. You just disappeared without telling anyone."

Izuku didn't know how to feel about that. A part of him was amazed. People...actually *missed* him? *Him?* A quirkless deku that was of no use to anyone? These people, heroes who actually *mattered,* cared about him enough to miss him? It felt oddly nice, but it was quickly overridden by an insane sense of guilt. Stupid deku. He'd just made life so much harder for the heroes and distracted them from saving people and, yes, he'd decided to not go out as a vigilante so that Mom wouldn't be worried, but instead he'd just caused so many problems for the heroes and he really was an idiot and why did he ever think that he could be useful? He should have just jumped when Kacchan told him to, but then Kacchan would get in trouble and…

Shouta cursed himself as the silence over the comm link stretched on. He had been so relieved that Viridian was alive that he hadn't even been thinking! The kid was suicidal, which meant he probably felt like a burden on those around him, which meant that he would probably feel guilty to making them worry, which wouldn't make him any less suicidal. Shouta jumped onto another rooftop as he ran toward the alley the kid had mentioned. Viridian was most likely freaking out on

the other end of the line and beating himself up for something that might not even be his fault. How was Shouta supposed to fix this?

“Not that you really had to let anyone know, you are your own person, afterall.” Shouta grimaced at how awkward he sounded. “Basically, we care about you, kid, and we missed you these last few weeks, but I’m glad you’re ok...you *are* ok, aren’t you?”

There was another moment of silence, then a sniff, “Y-you care?”

Shouta sighed in relief, “Yeah kid, but you didn’t answer my question.”

“Oh…” Viridian’s voice trailed off, “um, it’s kinda stupid...I just...you should probably hurry, it’s been a while since they went in that alley.”

“I’m almost there.” Shouta decided it’d probably be best not to press the kid for answers. It sounded like he’d barely managed to avoid giving the kid a panic attack, so he didn’t want to risk that again. Right now, he just needed to make sure the kid could trust him.

He finally reached the alley, and the villain went down surprisingly easily. Then again, that probably had something to do with the way Shouta snuck up on him and pulled him away from the woman, restraining him completely before he even had the chance to fight back. They guy started growling and tried to fight back, but Shouta simply glared at him with enough force that he shut up. He was about to turn to comfort the victim when he heard a muttering in his ear.

“...alright, that’s suspicious, but probably not a big deal...oh no! Yeah, that’s definitely not good. They probably have a quirk that silences alarms if the jewelry store didn’t even have their lights go one when that guy threw a rock through the window….”

Shouta gave a small snort. The kid had forgotten to cut the comm link after Shouta took care of the situation, “What are you muttering about, Viridian?”

“Oh, Eraser, you’re still here! I’m sorry, that was probably really annoying, it’s just that there’s a robbery, but I think Amplifier’s closer, so I should call her. Bye!”

And with that, the kid was gone. Shouta shook his head and couldn’t help the small smile on his face as he turned to the victim. The kid was alive, at the very least, even if he wasn’t out on the streets. He was just about to call Tsukauchi when he froze.

How had the kid known where to find this crime? And how had he gained access to Shouta's comm? He seemed to have a bird's eye view of the robbery he was sending Amplifier to, so had he somehow managed to hack into the security cameras? He felt a little swell of pride. The kid really was pretty smart, wasn't he?

He shook his head fondly as he connected to Tsukauchi, "Hey Tsukauchi, I've got a villain and victim ready for pick up on Lake Street. Oh, and by the way," Shouta couldn't help the huge grin that spread across his face, "Viridian's back."

Quirks

Chapter Summary

Izuku continues his virtual vigilantism.

Chapter Notes

First off, sorry this chapter is a few hours late. It was just so beautiful and overcast where I live, so it would have been a waste if I hadn't gone to sit out in the rain. I jumped on the tramp and it was so windy that it felt like I was flying. It was amazing.
Better news, we got some fanart from Ro on the discord server! They drew our flustered vigilante boy and our relieved dadzawa.

Izuku wasn't used to feeling proud of himself. He wasn't used to feeling loved either, but Mom had at least exposed him to the emotion, so it was understandable that the past week had been pretty strange. He had been doing virtual vigilantism every night, and he was getting so much better at hacking! He'd been working up to hacking into all the cameras in front of stores and stuff so that he had eyes everywhere, and it was so much fun!

Not to mention that in some cases, it was actually *faster* to get heroes to crimes by hacking into their comms. He still couldn't wait to get his cast off so he could help the heroes fight, but...maybe he'd have to spend a few days a week doing it this way, even after he healed. He'd cross that bridge when he got to it, but for now, he finally felt like he was doing something right for once in his life.

Which brought him to the other unfamiliar emotion: feeling loved. He'd thought that maybe Eraserhead was just the exception and only missed him because of his habit of adopting strays. If he stopped to pet stray cats, of course he'd remember an annoying vigilante, so it only made sense that he'd miss Izuku because he was just more caring than normal, but that didn't seem to be the case. Every hero Izuku called seemed happy to hear his voice and said they missed him. They even asked if he was ok! No one asked if Izuku was ok, not Kacchan, not his teachers, not his classmates, but here were actual real life pro heroes who seemed to care!

Izuku knew that they only cared because they didn't know he was quirkless, so he couldn't help but feel a little bit guilty for lying to them. A part of him knew that he should just tell them so that they

didn't waste their time on him, and he felt so selfish for keeping his quirklessness to himself, but he...he didn't want to lose this feeling. He knew he didn't deserve to feel loved, but...well it wasn't like he was actually lying to the heroes, right? He was just leaving out some info.

That was part of the reason why he'd been dodging all the questions about what had forced him off the streets. If they knew he broke his arm, or when he broke it, then they might be able to pull hospital records or something and then they'd know who he was and then they'd know he was quirkless and they'd force him to stop and they'd tell Mom and she'd be so worried and…

This was a problem with slow nights. Not that Izuku wasn't glad that no one was out committing crimes, but it left him too much time to get lost in his head. He switched between cameras again, looking for anything suspicious. There were a couple drunks, like there were every night, and some other people wandering about, but no one was doing anything criminal as far as he could see. The closest thing to a problem he could see was a group of teenagers smoking, but they weren't hurting anyone, even if they were loitering.

He was about to switch cameras again and see if he could track down any of the heroes and see what they were doing when one of the teens jerked suddenly, slapping his neck. Within seconds, the others were batting at the air and slapping themselves as well, but beyond that, Izuku couldn't see anything wrong. He really wished the camera he was watching through had audio so he could tell if they were just hallucinating from whatever they were smoking or if they needed help, but that was one of the disadvantages to doing his vigilantism virtually.

It wasn't until they started attacking one another with their powerful quirks that he called the heroes. He debated a minute about which hero would be best before deciding they'd probably appreciate back-up for a fight this big.

"Um, Eraser, Amplifier? A-are you guys busy?"

"Nope!" Amplifier chirped, "We're never too busy for you, cutie!"

Izuku blushed, but concentrated on the task at hand. The fight was going to start spreading soon, if the way the teens' quirks were going out of control were any indication.

"What's up, problem child?" Eraser asked. "You normally only call one hero at a time."

“Oh! Um, there’s a fight on Hill Street. I don’t know what started it, but…yeah it’s starting to spread. I think the teens are all friends with each other, or at least that’s how it seemed before they suddenly started fighting each other.”

“Alright, I’m on my way, kid.”

“Me too!”

Thankfully, it only took a few minutes for the two to reach the scene. Amplifier got there first and started using her quirk to disorient the fighters, confusing them as she leaped from building to building to basically surround them in sound. Izuku kept up a running commentary on the quirks he could see being used as they waited for Eraser to arrive, pointing out any weaknesses that Amplifier might be able to exploit.

“Alright, be careful of the guy with the backpack and try to stay behind him, but um, you already knew that, since he’s basically extending his tongue into a net. If he does try to go for you, stay close to the ground, because I can’t imagine the street tastes very good and it might buy you some time. Um, who else…wait, did that guy just teleport?!”

The villain in question suddenly appeared slightly behind and to the left of Amplifier, landing a hit to her back before disappearing again, only to appear a few feet away. Well, that was strange. With a teleportation quirk, he could have just left as soon as Amplifier arrived, so why did he stick around. Did he *want* to fight Amplifier? Or did he have a limit on how far he could go? The latter option seemed more likely, because what teenager would willingly fight a pro-hero?

He watched the teleporter for another minute. He definitely kept Amplifier on her toes, but after that first time, she was able to get a glance of him in her peripheral vision due to his habit of popping up either slightly to the left or right of slightly behind her. That didn’t make sense. Why wouldn’t he appear directly behind her…unless he couldn’t.

“Amplifier, try and bait the tongue guy into blocking the teleporter’s field of vision.”

He saw her nod and within a few seconds, the teleporter’s head was wrapped in his friend’s tongue. Izuku shuddered. Gross. But, as expected, he didn’t teleport to get out, instead punching the muscle

until it let him go as Eraserhead finally arrived. Amplifier used that moment of distraction to knock out and restrain the tongue guy.

“Sorry I’m late.” Eraser said gruffly as he took out one of the other fighters, a guy with a few too many eyes.

“No problem, happy to have you.” Izuku grinned. It was so cool to be able to watch them fight. “Oh, and the teleporter has a vision based quirk like you, Eraser! He can only teleport to places he can see, so try to blind him before you have to blink.”

Eraser didn’t waste any time wrapping his capture weapon around the man’s eyes and knocking him out. There were still a few other fighters still on their feet and they immediately charged the heroes with a vengeance.

“Would’ve been nice to know these guys are hopped up on trigger, Viridian.” Eraser grunted.

Izuku’s eyes widened and he facepalmed, wincing as he accidentally hit himself in the face with his cast. Should have used the other hand, “I’m so sorry! I should have realized that they shouldn’t have all had such strong quirks and then you would have been prepared and then…”

“Be nice to the kid, Eraser.” Amplifier said as she punched someone in the face. “It’s not like he could tell they were high from all the way in his bedroom.”

Izuku shrunk in on himself. He was so useless! He couldn’t do anything right. Yeah, he was doing the best he could with a broken arm, but Amplifier was right, there were things he missed because he wasn’t actually down on the street. If the heroes lost this fight or got hurt it would be all his fault because he told them to go even though he didn’t have all the right info.

Thankfully, the fight didn’t last too much longer, since between Eraser cancelling their quirks and Amplifier disorienting them, the fighters didn’t stand a chance. He heard Amplifier talking to Tsukauchi over the comms and was about to cut his own connection when Eraser started talking.

“Viridian?” He said softly. “Are you still there? You went kinda quiet there for a minute.”

Izuku was tempted to not respond. Maybe then Eraser would assume

that he left them alone like he should have been doing all along, rather than annoying them with his stupid marbles and stupid incomplete information.

There was a sigh over the line, “You’re not annoying us, kid. I’m sorry if I gave you that idea during the fight, I was just frustrated because trigger cases have been going up recently. It’s not your fault, problem child.”

“I should have been able to tell.” Izuku’s face burned as his voice came out choked. Why did he have to start crying *now* of all times?!

“No.” Eraser said firmly. “Amplifier was right, there wasn’t any way for you to tell they were on trigger just from the camera feed. It’s enough of an accomplishment that you were able to see the feed in the first place, so stop beating yourself up, ok?”

“...ok.” Izuku still wasn’t convinced, but he didn’t want Eraser to feel guilty just because he couldn’t control his stupid emotions and his stupid tears and his stupid muttering and his stupid…

“Are you ever gonna tell us why you switched to online, kiddo?” Amplifier asked. Izuku jumped, he’d forgotten he was still connected to her comm as well.

“Oh, um, just...stuff and, you know...life.” He grimaced. *Smooth.* “Um, thanks. Goodnight!”

He cut the link before either of them could say anything else. Izuku frowned and rubbed at his arm, which had become annoying itchy as it healed. Maybe he’d half to start researching problems beforehand so he had more information to give to the heroes. It probably wouldn’t help with stuff like muggings, but maybe for drug busts? Maybe he could find some more info on trigger to pay Eraser back for today?

Izuku sighed and closed down his computer before crawling back into bed. He’d have to deal with that tomorrow.

Izuku rubbed his head as he tried, once again, to concentrate on his history assignment, but it was no good. He’d woken up a few minutes before his alarm this morning, gasping as he remembered the fight when he’d actually met Eraserhead for the first time. That had also been a group of thugs minding their own business who suddenly went crazy and started fighting each other for no reason, and Eraser had mentioned they had trigger in their systems. And there was also the

thing with the flys. He hadn't thought much of it last night, but those teens had been swatting at the air almost like there were bugs or something trying to bite them.

Izuku sighed and grabbed his phone. He wasn't being able to concentrate anyway, so he may as well take a walk to clear his head, right? And who knew, maybe he'd find something where the fight broke out that would be able to help Eraser's investigation.

He had to take a train to get to the corner where the teens had been smoking, and Izuku got plenty of weird looks, considering that most kids his age were supposed to be at school in the middle of the afternoon, but Izuku ignored them and most people just shrugged and continued on with their days. Izuku wasn't surprised, people always looked away from him, he just wasn't interesting enough to merit paying attention to. He was used to being ignored.

The corner looked different in daylight, and Izuku looked up until he saw the camera he'd hacked into the night before. It was weird seeing the street from this angle, but a good kind of weird, and it made Izuku smile slightly before he went back to looking around for clues. He didn't really know what he was looking for. After all, if there were insects or mosquitos or something, they would be long gone by now, but…

A metallic glint caught Izuku's eye and he looked around briefly before walking toward it and kneeling down. He sucked in a harsh breath as he saw the crushed corpse of a tiny robotic bee, a cracked glass cylinder acting as its abdomen. The guy that slapped his neck must have managed to damage it enough that it couldn't fly away, and the abdomen container could easily hold a tiny dose of trigger, which would explain why Izuku had never seen either group shoot up.

Izuku grabbed a small ziplock from his bag, it had held carrots at one point, and picked up the bee, hoping there was enough of it left for him to hack into, then started heading back home. He still had homework to finish, after all.

Bees

Chapter Summary

Izuku researches more about the robotic bee he found.

Chapter Notes

First off, sorry to anyone who actually knows how to program. I know the bare minimum and am pretending I know more than I do.
Second off, we got more art!
From Termite
From Beaumains1

After dinner, Izuku finally had a moment to inspect the robotic bee he'd found. He'd have to give it to Eraserhead later, but he may as well find out as much about it as he could before then. It was the least he could do after all the trouble he'd caused Eraser last night.

He took the ziplock out of his bag and looked at it. At first glance, it seemed to be made of metal, but the longer he looked, the more it seemed like that couldn't be quite right. It didn't seem as shiny as it should be, which could be explained by some sort of matte finish, but that didn't explain the way that some parts of the bee seemed to be almost deteriorating, as if the bee itself were actually organic.

Izuku got out a notebook and jotted down a few ideas. He obviously didn't have the tools to break down the chemistry of the robot in his room, but there were many quirks that granted control over technology. There were also quirks that created metal-like alloys from the user's blood or tissue. Knowing that, it was completely possible that this bee was actually the result of a quirk, which would make it both organic and inorganic at the same time. And if it was the result of a quirk, there might be some mention of it in the news, especially if this quirk user had dosed people similarly in the past.

Over the next hour, Izuku found quite a few similar quirks, including one that allowed the user to control any living bees they came in contact with through pheromones, which was super cool and had Izuku reaching toward his notebook, but the most noteworthy belonged to a villain that had gained the moniker of Queen Bee a few years in Naruhata. There were several conflicting stories, considering that the people who controlled the bees seemed to have multiple

quirks, which just wasn't possible. The most likely theory was that Queen Bee was actually some sort of parasite that infected a host. The host could still use their original quirk, but the parasite created a sort of hive mind that the Queen herself controlled.

It was a fascinating quirk and Izuku wondered how the heroes would even counter that. Maybe if they destroyed the queen? But there was always the possibility that another bee would simply become the queen, so if that was the case, they would have to find some way to track down every bee and destroy them, which would be pretty much impossible. It was a shame that such a powerful quirk was being used for evil. Izuku could think of so many ways that it could help people. The bees seemed to be able to hold small amounts of any liquid, so they could administer life-saving medicine, or even antidotes if a villain with a poisonous quirk attacked. Considering the hive mind, the host could most likely use the bees to spy and gather valuable intelligence by being an almost literal fly on the wall because no one ever paid attention to bugs. It was such a cool quirk!

Izuku took the bee out of the bag and tried to see if there was any way to hack into it. It probably didn't have a hard line, but since it had robotic elements, it most likely had had some way to communicate with it's queen, which meant that izuku could slip in and hopefully get into the bee's head. Of course, since the bee was quirk-made, there was a possibility that the robotic look was just a side effect and it was impossible to hack in, but it was worth a try, at least.

It took a lot of experimentation and it was almost time for bed when Izuku finally managed to wirelessly connect to the bee's...brain? Hard drive? Most of the files were corrupted, which was understandable considering how mangled the bee itself was, but Izuku did manage to find one called Directives. After quickly checking for viruses and trackers, which didn't turn up anything, Izuku opened the file.

If (Abdomen = full) {Inject any human}

Else {return to hive}

There were a few more commands, but that was the one that stood out to Izuku the most. That meant that the instant villains really were random victims, not simply using the bees as some sort of alternate injection method to get high. But why? What did Queen Bee stand to gain by turning random people into villains?

Of course, finding more information on Queen Bee led him down a

rabbit hole of the instant villain craze that had happened in Naruhata. Just like what was happening right now, unsuspecting civilians were being dosed with trigger to cause chaos. On the surface, it seemed that Queen Bee was one of those villains that simply enjoyed causing senseless destruction, and that would have been the end of it, except for the fact that people called Next Level Villains popped up a little after that.

The Next Level Villains had all been instant villains at one time or another, but then disappeared. They reappeared a few months later manifesting permanent changes from human experimentation and dosed with huge quantities of trigger. Thankfully, they didn't have any permanent mental changes after the drug wore off and were mostly able to return to their normal lives, but none of them remembered being kidnapped or who had experimented on them.

Izuku frowned. The people behind this operation obviously had some goal in mind. Their experiments were leading to something, the only question was, what? It couldn't be the Next Level villains, because then the instant villains would have stopped after those appeared in Naruhata. Were they trying to find a way to make quirks more powerful? But trigger did that on it's own. So maybe trying to find a way to make a quirk permanently more powerful?

That made a lot more sense. Izuku was sure that many people with weak quirks would be willing to go through a lot of pain, and probably pay a lot of money, if they could have their quirk become permanently stronger. It did provide motive.

But then why have the instant villains? If they wanted to make the stronger quirks permanent, then why go through the trouble of dosing random people with a temporary drug, unless...unless they were using these incidents to evaluate victims for their experiments. They would be able to see which people had promising quirks and see how they reacted to the drug, then kidnap them later. Queen Bee wasn't creating instant villains to cause chaos and fear among the public and heroes, she was scouting out potential victims for the next round of experiments.

Izuku jumped as his vigilante alarm went off. Had he really been doing this half the night? Izuku stood and stretched, wincing as his back popped. He'd been in front of a screen for hours and really didn't want to spend another few hours sitting in the same position. He felt so selfish, because he was supposed to be helping people, even if it meant that he was in pain, but he just couldn't bring himself to sit

back down. If only he could go out on the streets again.

Izuku paused and looked at his cast. The doctor said six weeks, and it had really only been around five, but…well, his arm was probably mostly healed by now. He should be fine to run around now, as long as he was careful to avoid getting into any fights. Izuku tried to talk himself out of going out, but apparently he'd been going more stir crazy over the past few weeks than he'd thought. Something about being homeschooled was making him even more restless to go out and run from the heroes.

Izuku dug his vigilante outfit out from the back of his closet and put it on, making sure he had a few marbles. It probably wouldn't be the best to use his slingshot until he got the cast off, so he didn't need enough for ammo, but he did need enough to let the heroes know it was him! He also grabbed the robotic bee from where it was sitting on his table, putting it back in the ziplock bag. This would be the perfect time to hand it over to Eraserhead and share what he'd just found out!

By the time Izuku left the apartment, he was buzzing with nervous energy. As he took off toward his patrol route, he couldn't help the wide smile that spread across his face. He'd really missed this.

Fight

Chapter Summary

> Izuku goes out as a vigilante for the first time since he broke his arm.

Chapter Notes

> Look at this awesome fanart by Chikara!

Shouta watched as some cops dragged away the mugger he'd just taken down, then used his capture weapon to pull himself up onto the rooftops to look for more problems. He wondered if Viridian would call him today before dismissing the thought. He didn't have to talk to the problem child every night. It's not like he was the kid's dad or anything.

He was just about to jump onto the next rooftop when he felt something small and hard bounce off the back of his head. Immediately, he activated his quirk and whirled around, gripping his capture weapon in preparation to deal with whatever threat had managed to sneak up on him, only to see the damn problem child, smiling brightly and *waving at him with a goddamn broken arm!*

"Kid, is your arm broken?!" Ok, so that probably wasn't the best thing to say, considering that the cast was fairly obvious, but sue him, it was the first time he'd seen the kid in over a month and he shows up with an obvious injury. Of course Shouta had the right to be a little shocked. And what was the kid doing out with a broken arm?

At least the kid had the decency to look embarrassed, "Well, um, not anymore, at least I don't think…" The kid tugged on his sleeve in a belated attempt to hide the cast from view. "It should be pretty much healed by now. But don't worry! I'm not actually planning on getting into any fights tonight, but, um, we need to go so that *you* can get into a fight!"

Shouta sighed heavily, "Lead the way, problem child."

The kid smiled and took off.

In his defense, Izuku hadn't been *looking* for a mugging. He'd been planning on finding Eraser first thing, but then he'd heard a scream

and he couldn't just leave it alone! Oh well, he'd just have to talk to Eraser about the bee after the fight. Thankfully, because he'd been looking for him in the first place, the mugging wasn't that far from where he'd found Eraserhead, so it didn't take long at all for them to reach it.

He was about to jump down onto the street out of habit when Eraser glared at him, *"Stay put, problem child."*

Izuku laughed sheepishly, "I, um, wasn't going to join the fight?"

Eraser simply looked at him with a tired skepticism, and Izuku could almost *feel* him rolling his eyes behind his goggles, but he just sighed and jumped down to take care of the villain. Izuku got out his notebook and started scribbling down the different techniques that he used, most of which Izuku was familiar with from watching previous fights. There was only one guy, and he was obviously a little drunk, so it didn't take long at all for Eraser to take him down and restrain him.

Wait, now that the villain was restrained, the cops would probably be coming soon to take him in, and Izuku probably shouldn't still be there when they came, seeing as how he was a vigilante and all. Izuku put his notebook back in his pocket and stood to leave, only to be wrapped in Eraser's capture weapon before he could jump to the next roof.

He looked up at Eraser, who was glaring at him with his quirk activated, "Go home, problem child."

Izuku couldn't help pouting like a petulant child, "I've hardly left my house in five weeks, Eraser! I"m going stir crazy!"

"Running around with a broken arm is irrational." Eraser countered.

"I've only been outside like three times in the last month!" Izuku pleaded. Now that he was actually out and running around, he didn't want to go back home. "And one of those was to go to the grocery store, so it doesn't even count! Please, just let me have this!"

Eraser simply tightened his capture weapon slightly, "Do I need to escort you home?"

"I'm a vigilante, remember?" Izuku pointed out. "I've got a secret identity to protect."

Where was all this confidence coming from? Since when did he get so

comfortable with Eraserhead to...was this sass? Or were they just arguing? Either way, Izuku wasn't used to acting this way with *anyone,* much less with an adult. Maybe it had something to do with the fact that Eraser had *missed* him when he disappeared or the fact that he actually seemed to care about what happened to him, even if that care manifested in a protectiveness for his broken arm.

But, oddly enough, Eraser didn't seem to mind it. He wasn't getting mad at Izuku for back talking him like his teachers would. He wasn't blowing up like Kacchan would. He was just...taking it in stride, like this was how Izuku was *supposed* to act toward him. It was weird.

Eraser was still holding him tightly and Izuku knew he probably wouldn't let go until he promised to head straight home. Well, Izuku could probably use the sleep, considering that he'd been up all night researching the...Oh! Izuku had forgotten that he still needed to tell Eraser what he'd learned about the bee! And he had so many questions about that rash of instant villains in Naruhata. If he was correct, Eraser had been involved with those ones too.

"Fine." He said finally. "I'll go home and rest, but only if you answer some of my questions."

Shouta rolled his eyes, but nodded and unwrapped his capture weapon. This kid was gonna be the death of him. Going out and looking for fights with a broken arm? He had zero sense of self preservation, which Shouta probably should have expected, considering that the kid was likely suicidal, but it was one thing to theorize about it and another entirely to see it in action. The only comforting thing about this whole situation was that, looking at the timeline of Viridian's disappearance, he probably went off the grid because of his arm, not his depression. And he was acting more confident than usual, so maybe the break had been good for him.

Viridian's eyes lit up, "I want to know more about the instant villains!"

Shouta's eyes widened, "Where did you learn that term? Did I mention it?"

Viridian shook his head, "No, I was just looking up stuff, because there have been a couple times that groups of people have gotten dosed with trigger, but I never actually saw them shoot up. I ended up going to the place where that group last night got dosed, and I found this!"

The kid dug in his hoodie pocket for a moment before pulling out a ziplock bag and handing over. Shouta looked at him in confusion, then looked at the bag and his blood ran cold. A tiny mechanical bee. He'd considered the possibility that Queen Bee could be involved in this, but he'd hoped that they'd succeeded in destroying all the bees after that whole fiasco with Pop Step, but apparently not.

"It belongs to a villain named Queen Bee, who was heavily involved with the instant villain incidents a few years ago in Naruhata," Viridian frowned, "well, I don't actually have to tell you that, considering that I'm pretty sure you were on the case back then. Wiat, were you on the case back then? I'm so sorry for assuming and…"

Ah, Viridian's insecurities were back. Shouta cut him off before the kid could work himself into a panic, "Yeah, I was part of that investigation. In fact, I still am, that's why I'm one of the heroes tracking trigger."

Viridian sighed in relief, "Okay. Good. So anyway, once I found the bee, then it was pretty easy to trace back to Naruhata. Were the victims back then random, or were they picked for any specific reason?"

"They were random." Shouta responded. "Well, some of them annoyed the host or bought the drugs to get high, but most of them were just in the wrong place at the wrong time."

"That's what I thought." Viridian pinched his lower lip in thought. "And of those instant villains, a few disappeared after the incident, only to return as the modified next level villains, right?"

Shouta nodded.

Viridian sighed, "That's what I was worried about. The bees have orders to target any random citizen as long as they're loaded with the drug…"

"Wait, what?" The kid had managed to lose him. "How do you know what their orders are?"

The kid looked surprised, "Oh, I hacked it."

Shouta had to have heard that wrong, "You... *hacked* the bee? It's quirk created, how did you hack into it?"

Viridian shrugged, "Well, I knew that it had to have some way of

communicating with the queen when it was alive, and since it seems to have the characteristics of a robot, I assumed that it was communicating wirelessly. Honestly, it was just a lucky guess."

Shouta grinned. Knowing the bees could be hacked could be a game changer, "What did you find, kid?"

"Well most of the files were corrupted when the bee was destroyed." Viridian frowned. "Or maybe it has more to do with being cut off from the hive? Well, anyway, I was able to view it's directive file, which basically ordered it to target anyone. I'm just concerned because the last time this happened, well, you know, I don't have to tell you because you were there and…"

The kid was mumbling again, "Problem child?"

Viridian flinched, then took a deep breath, ""The last time there was an outbreak of instant villains like this, whoever was behind it seemed to be looking for candidates for next level villains. But the thing is, it's been months since this started in Musutafu and we should have seen at least one next level villain by now if they follow their old pattern. But what if next level villains aren't their ultimate goal and they're moving onto the next phase of their experiments?"

Shouta swallowed, "Then there's a possibility that these victims are in danger. And when they came back…"

"They'll be permanently modified and even more dangerous." Viridian followed. "I have a theory that they're most likely trying to permanently strengthen a person's quirk, but it's just a theory. I know that it's probably not feasible to put every instant villain under police protection, but if we just knew the *kinds* of quirks they were looking for, then…"

The kid was digging too deep. Shouta didn't know who exactly was behind the villain factory, he was still really skeptical of the whole All for One myth, but he knew they were powerful enough to kidnap a witness out of a police interrogation room. Viridian was a teenager. A smart teenager, a teenager with a death wish and zero sense of self preservation, but a teenager nonetheless. However valuable the kid's investigation was, his involvement was going to catch the attention of all the wrong people and put him in danger. He had to put a stop to this.

"Kid." He cut off Viridian's ramblings. "I need you to stop looking into this, ok?"

Viridian looked at him in confusion, “Why?”

“You’re meddling in things you have no way to understand.” Shouta said. “If you don’t drop this, you’re only going to put yourself in danger.”

“But if I can protect people…”

“NO!” Viridian flinched at his yell. Shouta cursed softly, he shouldn’t have done that. The kid obviously had some trauma, and him yelling wasn’t going to help the kid trust him at all. He forced himself to take a deep breath. “Viridian, you’re a kid. You should be worrying about going to the mall with friends, not about drug rings and kidnappings.”

Viridian was silent for a long moment, “I never had any friends to worry about…”

Before Shouta could apologize or ask what he meant by that, the kid ran and jumped onto the next roof, then disappeared into the shadows.

Shouta could only hope that he actually went home like he’d promised.

Just Try

Chapter Summary

Making friends tends to be more difficult when you hate yourself.

“You should go mingle.”

Katsuki rolled his eyes at Amplifier, “Yeah, cause a five minute conversation with an asshole is *really* gonna help these extras reintegrate into society.”

They were currently doing an exercise where the villains had broken into smaller groups to talk about what they’d done wrong, something about admitting their mistakes out loud or something to give them the power to fix them. Katsuki thought it sounded fake, but maybe that was just because he was too big of a coward to admit what he’d done.

“I’m just saying,” Amplifier nudged his arm gently, “you’ve been coming to these meetings for weeks and still haven’t made a single friend.”

There were reasons for that. One, Katuski didn’t want to do anything to jeopardize his chances of being a hero. Well, anything more than he’d already done. Which was what led him to his second reason for keeping these extras at arms length: they were better than him. How shitty was that? A bunch of convicted villains with tracking bracelets on their legs were better than the great Katsuki Bakugo! Sure, they’d done bad things, but at least they had good reasons, be it discrimination, or money troubles, or even just bad friends, but Katsuki...he was just a jerk.

Maybe this whole volunteering thing had been a mistake. These people didn’t need someone like Katsuki dragging them down. Hell if he was going to admit that though, and he had made a promise, so he was gonna fucking keep it.

“Go on,” Amplifier smiled at him encouragingly, “if you go and talk to one of the groups for three minutes, I’ll let you brood for the rest of the time. Deal?”

“I’m not brooding.” Katsuki glared at her, but Amplifier just smiled. Damn, that face always worked on people at school, even the adults. Katsuki was gonna have to step up his intimidation game.

Eventually, he sighed, “You’ll stop bitching at me to be social?”

She nodded, still smiling that infuriating little smile that meant that Katsuki had lost and she knew it. Still grumbling he made his way to the group with that tentacle-haired freak that kept trying to talk to him. What was his name? Ogawa? Whatever it was, it didn’t matter, because Katsuki was just there to get Amplifier off his back and then he’d be able to go back to...it wasn’t *brooding,* goddamn it!

Katsuki grabbed a chair and sat on it backwards so his arms were resting on the back. The villain who always wore pigtails, she said it had something to do with her quirk, was just finishing her story.

“So yeah,” she shrugged, “I robbed a couple places, what are you gonna do? They were insured, so it’s not like I hurt anybody.”

Katsuki scowled. Yet another way he was even worse than these scum. Even when committing crimes, they didn’t hurt people, whereas Katsuki had spent ten years hurting people for fun. He sucked.

“I don’t think that’s really the point.” Ogawa said. “Just because no one ended up hurt in the end doesn’t mean that stealing was the right thing to do. Maybe it has more to do with what effect our actions have on *us,* you know? Like what kind of person are we becoming?”

Katsuki couldn’t help scoffing, “Never took you for the sentimental type.”

Ogawa grinned, “Haven't spoken to me enough to really make a judgement, have you?”

“Whatever,” Katsuki huffed, “so what about you? What kind of person did your actions make the great tentacle-haired extra?”

The other villains in the circle laughed at the nickname, but Ogawa simply frowned and thought about the question for a minute, “I think...I think it made me lost. My crimes were never very big, like, I never committed any felonies or anything, but...I don’t know, I was just obsessed with the thrill more than anything. I think my mistakes made me selfish.”

“And what’s wrong with being a little selfish sometimes?” The frankenstein-looking villain asked. Katsuki really needed to learn these people’s names...or at least come up with better nicknames for them.

“Nothing’s wrong with it!” Ogawa said quickly. “It’s just not who I

want to be, you know? I don't want to be the kind of guy that only thinks of myself."

"What about you, Bakugo?" Pig-tailed bitch asked. "You ever made a mistake?"

Too many to count, Katsuki thought as he glared at her, "You fuckers might be comfortable wearing your hearts on your sleeves, but don't you drag me into this."

"Technically, you dragged yourself." Ogawa laughed. "Unlike the rest of us, you *volunteered* to be here."

Yeah, well, how else was he gonna learn not to be so shitty, huh? There was only so much someone could improve from a google search and someone like him didn't deserve to be a hero, much less number one. But again, he wasn't gonna just *say* that, "Fuck off."

"Oooh," Pig-tails said, "looks like we hit a nerve. So what *did* you do? Cause with a reaction like that, it sure as hell wasn't nothing."

"Maybe I've never made a mistake in my life, you ever thought about that?" Katsuki snapped. "Or maybe I just don't like you!"

Frankenstein gave a booming laugh, "Yeah, I'll believe that."

"Hey, lay off him for a minute." Ogawa put a hand up to stop the teasing. "It takes a lot of trust to open up like we have been, and we can't scare Bakugo off when he's just gotten up the courage to talk to us."

"Fuck you!"

"Give it some time, Bakugo." Frankenstein said. "We're not so scary once you get to know us."

"I'm not a goddamn coward!" The lie tasted bitter on his tongue and he hated it. Why was he so fucking weak?!

Thankfully, Amplifier saved him from further pestering by calling their attention to the front. Katsuki was about to go back to his place standing against the wall, but before he could stand, Ogawa looked at him and cocked one eyebrow knowingly. Smug bastard. So Katsuki scoffed and settled back into his chair, determined to prove that he wasn't *scared.* He'd already lost to Amplifier when she accused him of brooding, so there was no way he was about to let Ogawa win by

saying that Katsuki was too scared to be social or some shit. He'd stick around, get to know them, still hate them, and that would prove that smug little tentacle-haired bastard wrong!

Katsuki already hated himself, so it's not like he had any pride left to lose anyway.

Izuku picked at his dinner, not feeling hungry despite how good the food looked. Mom had somehow picked up on his mood and come home a little early to make him Katsudon, which only succeeded in making him feel even worse. First, he'd gone out with a broken arm, then he'd gotten in a fight with Eraserhead, and then he couldn't even hide his guilt enough to keep his mom from worrying. He was the worst.

"I think I'm going to save this for later." Izuku said finally. "I'm not really hungry right now."

Mom frowned at him, but nodded, "Is everything alright, baby? There's not any problems with your new school, is there?"

"No, no! School's great, I don't think I've ever enjoyed school more!" Izuku said frantically.

"I'm glad." Mom gave a small, genuine smile. "But you don't have to hide things from me, baby. I know you hid the bullying because you didn't want to worry me, but I want to know what's going on in your life. I'm strong, I can take it."

Izuku laughed as Mom flexed like All Might, pushing up the flab on her arms so it looked like muscles. After a moment, Mom couldn't keep a straight face and started laughing too. It was moments like this that were almost worth living for. Almost.

Izuku bit his lip. He couldn't tell Mom about the whole thing with Eraserhead, because that would mean telling ehr about the vigilantism, which she didn't deserve no matter how strong she was, but maybe he could hint at some of it…

"Well, there's this guy who I run into online sometimes," well, online was pushing it, but he did talk to him through the computer whenever he hacked into the hero comms, "we run in a lot of the same circles…"

"A boy?" Mom teased. "Should I be worried about someone stealing my baby's heart?"

Izuku blushed and grimaced, “Ew! No! It’s not like that at all! He’s like...a grumpy old uncle or something like that. Gross, no!”

Mom chucked, “Alright. Still, you need to be careful about people you meet online, even if romance isn’t involved. I don’t want some creep showing up at our house all of a sudden.”

“Don’t worry, I’m very careful with my identity.” Izuku smiled briefly at his inside joke before letting his face fall as he continued, “But we kinda got in sort of a fight, and now I’m scared that he’s disappointed in me.”

Mom sat down next to him and started rubbing circles on his back, “What makes you think that?”

“He thinks I should be worried about having friends.” Izuku muttered. “But I don’t have any friends to be worried about.”

Mom’s eyes started shining like she was about to cry, “Oh, baby…”

“And it’s fine!” Izuku said quickly. “I mean, I haven’t had friends in years, and online school is great and like I said, I run in the same circles as this guy, and they don’t seem to hate me yet, which is better than I usually get, but I just can’t help feeling like I’ve disappointed him because maybe I just haven’t been trying hard enough.”

Mom was silent for a moment, still rubbing his back, “Well, you don’t have to do anything, but if you wanted to go out and try to make a friend, then I’d support you. If it works, then problem solved, and if they’re a jerk, then at least you can tell this guy you tried, right?”

“I...I guess that could work,” Izuku said slowly, “but who would I even…”

Izuku paused. He didn’t know a lot of people outside his middle school and anyone from there wasn’t going to work for this experiment. Who else did he...oh, there was that electric kid that worked at the hardware store who seemed kinda nice. He glanced up at the clock. Yeah, the store should still be open for a couple hours, so if he left right now, he might be able to run into him!

Izuku hopped, making Mom yelp in surprise, “I gotta go, I’ll text you if things work out!”

Mom blinked a few times, then smiled, “Alright, just don’t get home too late, I don’t want you walking around in the dark. Good luck,

baby!”

Izuku grinned at her as he left, then closed the door and took a deep breath.

“Thanks,” he said softly, “I’m gonna need it.”

Friendship

Chapter Summary

Izuku takes the plunge and tries to make a friend.

All the confidence that Izuku had felt as he ran out the door with the intention of making a friend had slowly dissipated during his train ride to the hardware store. He didn't even know if Kaminari was working today, and even if he *was* working, what was Izuku supposed to say to him?

Hey, sorry if this makes me sound like a stalker, but I'm not actually here to buy anything, I just wanted you to be my friend because I'm desperate and lonely. Wanna hang out?

Izuku grimaced. Yeah, *that* wouldn't be creepy at all. Maybe if he had an excuse to be there...he could use this as an opportunity to update his gear, right? When he'd gone out last night, had his gear all been in good shape? His pipes were fine, he hadn't needed his knife, but it was probably still sharp since he didn't actually use it all that often, and his slingshot was still good. What else did he even need?

Before he could even decide, Izuku was walking through the parking lot of the hardware store. Was it too late to turn around? He shouldn't have told Mom about this, because now there were two people who would be disappointed in him if he chickened out. Could he make up some sort of story? It would probably be a lot of work to maintain a fake friendship, but he was already leading a double life with his vigilantism, so he could do it if he needed to, but then Mom and Eraserhead would be disappointed with him for lying to them. Ugh! What was he supposed to do?

He didn't know if it made it more or less awkward that he didn't even make it into the store before he saw Kaminari. His apron was thrown casually over his shoulder as he walked away from the store, so he must have just gotten off his shift. He was fiddling with his phone as he put some earbuds in, but what caught Izuku's attention was the fact that he had the USB end of a phone charger stuck in his mouth.

"Can you really charge your phone like that?"

Kaminari yelped and lost his footing as he stumbled back, wincing as he fell hard on the asphalt. Izuku ran forward to help him up,

panicking even more than he had been the past a few minutes. He really couldn't do anything right, could he?

"I'm so sorry!" Izuku said frantically as he pulled Kaminari to his feet. "I didn't even mean to ask the question out loud, it just came out and I was curious, but I swear I didn't mean to scare you and now you probably think I'm really creepy because I just came out of nowhere and…"

Kaminari cut him off with a laugh, "It's no problem dude, nothing's broken and I wouldn't be trying for the hero course if I couldn't take a few hard knocks." He rubbed his hip where he'd fallen and chuckled awkwardly, "Not that getting startled that easily is really hero-like, but…"

Izuku shrunk in on himself, "Sorry. Again. I mean, for knocking you over."

"Like I said, it's no big deal." Kaminari shrugged. "How ya been? Is your mystery project going well?"

Izuku startled. Kaminari was talking about his vigilantism, even if he didn't actually *know* that, "Um…I actually haven't been able to work on it in a while." He held up his arm to show Kaminari his cast, "So, uh, yeah, it's kinda at a standstill."

"Oof, dude," Kaminari winced, "broken bones are no fun, but hey, at least you can get all your friends to sign your cast, so that's cool!"

Izuku shrugged sadly. Yeah, he knew that other people had their friends sign their casts, Kacchan had almost the entire grade sign his cast when he'd broken his leg in second grade jumping off the top of the slide before he'd learned how to use his explosions to catch himself. Izuku had signed too because Mom and Auntie Mitsuki had thought it would be cute if his best friend was the first one to sign Kacchan's cast, but when Izuku showed up to school the next day, his signature had been scribbled out with black sharpie and silver explosions had been drawn over it. He'd never tried to sign anyone's cast after that.

Apparently, his silence was pretty telling, because Kaminari put his hand on his chest in exaggerated shock, "Are you implying that you haven't gotten a single signature yet? That just won't do! Come here, dude."

Izuku took a few steps forward and his eyes widened as he saw

Kaminari pull a sharpie out of his back pocket.

“I guess it’s pretty lucky that they make us carry these things during our shift, right?” Kaminari grinned and grabbed Izuku’s arm to sign his cast, but then looked at him, suddenly insecure, “Oh, sorry dude, I mean, you might not even want me to sign your cast and here I am, acting like an idiot because I think it’s cool and…”

“No!” Izuku cleared his throat, “Um, I mean, I’d be honored if you’d sign my cast, Kaminari. It’s just that I don’t have a lot of friends, or really any friends, and I mean, you probably think I’m pretty lame and…”

Izuku trailed off as Kaminari actually started writing. He...he had a signature on his cast!

“Are you busy?” Izuku blurted out before he could second guess himself again, “I mean, um, do you want to hang out? You don’t have to! I mean, just because you signed my cast doesn’t mean that you’re obligated to like me or anything…”

Kaminari glanced between Izuku and the store a few times, “Aren’t you busy? Weren’t you about to buy some stuff for your project?”

“Well, actually,” and now came the awkward part, “um, like I said, I haven’t really been able to work on it because of my arm, but I have this...kinda weird grumpy uncle? And he wants me to try to make friends, because I don’t have any, obviously, because I mean, you can see that because nobody signed my cast and I don’t want to disappoint him, and you’re nice so…” Izuku winced, “I was wondering if you wanted to hang out?”

“So...you came here looking for me because your grumpy uncle made you promise to make friends?” Kaminari asked.

“...yes?”

To his surprise, Kaminari’s face split into a huge grim, “That’s hilarious, dude! Where do you want to go?”

Izuku’s jaw dropped, “Wait, really? You’re not creeped out? And you’re not too busy?”

“Dude, I *always* have time to hang out.” Kaminari said. “Mom says I’m the definition of a social butterfly, but then again, that might just be the adhd.” He shrugged, “Either way, I’m not gonna say no to a new

friend."

"O-ok…" Izuku said. "Um, there's a park nearby, if you wanna go there?"

Izuku had passed the park a few times during his vigilante hours, and at two in the morning it was a fairly popular spot for drug deals. Hopefully, it was a little different when the sun was still up. It wasn't a very long walk, and Izuku didn't really know what to talk about. It had been so long since he'd actually had a friend that he had no idea what he was doing, and just being himself would probably scare Kaminari away like it had everyone else, and now he'd been quiet for too long and talking now would just make everything weird, but if he didn't talk then that was even weirder and…

Kaminari was apparently braver than he was, because he was the one to break the silence, "So what's your name, dude? I don't think you actually told me, and if you did, then I forgot it. Actually, that's probably more likely, I'm kind of an idiot. I can keep calling you dude, but, you know, usually friends know each other's names."

Izuku chuckled awkwardly. Great, yet another way he'd completely messed this up, "Um, it's Izuku Midoriya. Sorry."

"Stop apologizing, dude!" Kaminari said, "Is Midoriya your real name? I mean, it's a cool name and all, don't get me wrong, but it seems a little *too* on the nose, what with your hair and eyes and everything, you know?"

"Um, yeah." Midioriya said, "Green is kinda the dominant gene in my family, so I think that's where the name came from, I really don't know." He needed to get the conversation off of him. He wasn't used to talking about himself and it was surprisingly uncomfortable. "So, uh, with everything that happened earlier, you never answered my question. Can you really charge your phone by sticking the charger in your mouth?"

Kaminari laughed, "Yeah, it works pretty well. A lot of my friends at school will use me for that, so I'm pretty used to it. And it's nice that I never have to worry about a dead battery."

Izuku's eyes shone as he thought about the possibilities, "Does that mean that your quirk is constantly producing electricity? Do you have to think about directing the electricity into the charger or does it just go there automatically? If you consciously direct the electricity, does the phone charge faster…" Izuku suddenly realized he was rambling

and slammed his mouth shut. So much for not being himself.

Kaminari, however, didn't seem put off by his questions, just a little intimidated, "I don't have to think about it, no, but I can't actually direct the electricity I produce. It's pretty annoying because it just builds up around my body and I can discharge it, but it kinda just goes everywhere." he grimaced, "I'm hoping UA will help me fix that."

They had arrived at the park by that point and found an empty bench to sit on. Thankfully, it was just a normal park during the day, no drug deals or other villains in sight. That would have been pretty embarrassing. Izuku couldn't stop himself from grabbing his notebook, glad that he'd thought to grab his bag on the way out the door, "So you can produce and discharge electricity, but can't aim it. Do you think that you would be able to with practice, or is that just an inborn limitation of your quirk?"

"I've been trying for years, so I think it's just a natural limit." Kaminari frowned, "Or one of them, at least."

That last part was grumbled under his breath, which made Izuku even more curious.

"One of them? What are the others?" Izuku's eyes widened as he realized that was probably a really creepy question, "Not that you have to tell me, I just really like quirks and think they're really cool, so I'm sorry if I'm annoying you or anything…"

Kaminari laughed, "It's not a problem, it's just kind of an embarrassing drawback."

"Oh?" Izuku could think of plenty of heroes that had embarrassing side effects to their quirks. In fact, there had been a kid in the sports festival just that year that had to do most of it naked because of his quirk's limitations.

"Yeah. Like I said, I can discharge electricity, but if I go over my limits," Kaminari smiled awkwardly, "I kinda fry my brain and turn into an idiot for a while."

Izuku's mind turned over the possibilities. That drawback couldn't be good for Kaminari's brain long term. Did he get headaches from it or did his quirk include a healing component to help his brain recover? He'd mentioned that he had adhd, so could that be a result of going over his limits? Probably not, but the extra electricity running through his brain *would* make his mind work faster than the average person's,

which would result in adhd-like symptoms. Oh, Kaminari was waiting for his reaction.

“What’s your limit?”

“Right now?” Izuku nodded and Kaminari thought for a second, “Just under a million volts, but I’m working on raising that in preparation for entrance exams.”

Izuku’s eyes widened, “That’s really impressive Kaminari!”

Kaminari grinned, “You really think so? I’ve been kinda worried cause, while my quirk is flashy, it’s kinda hard to control. The electricians I’ve been apprenticing under have been helping me understand the whole electricity thing, but they can’t really teach me quirk control, you know?”

Izuku nodded, “Quirks are difficult like that. The only way to really know their limits is to try things out.”

“Speaking of quirks, what’s yours?” Kaminari asked. “I bet it’s some kind of intelligence quirk, right? You’re really smart.”

Izuku’s smile faded and he scuffed at the dirt with his toe, “Um, I actually don’t...have one?”

Well, at least he’d be able to tell Eraserhead that he’d tried. It had been nice while it lasted, and there was probably some way to get the marker off his cast in case Kaminari didn’t want to be associated with him anymore.

“Oh.” Kaminari said quietly. “Um, what’s that like?”

Izuku looked up. Kaminari looked vaguely awkward, but in a curious way, like he didn’t know how to react, not like he was trying to figure out a way to get out of the conversation. While there was a little bit of pity, there wasn’t any trace of malice or hatred like Izuku was used to from the kids at school. Was it possible that Kaminari was still giving him a chance, even after knowing he’s quirkless? It seemed like almost too much to hope for.

“It’s, uh,” Izuku shrugged, “I guess I just don’t know any different.”

Kaminari thought about that for a minute, “That makes sense. I can’t imagine having a different quirk or not having a quirk at all, so I guess it’s kinda the same for you, huh?”

Izuku nodded. Kaminari's response was...refreshingly neutral. It almost made him afraid to ask his next question, "Do...do you hate me now?"

Kaminari just looked confused, "Ok, I know that I'm not very smart, but why would I hate you?"

"Because," Izuku wished he had enough courage to say the truth in anything louder than a whisper, "I'm useless."

Kaminari frowned, "Are you saying that because you're quirkless or is it because of something else? Because I haven't met many quirkless people, so I have no idea if that's what you're referring to, and I don't know you well enough yet to figure out if you're actually useless or not. But, hey, if you don't hate me for being stupid, then I won't hate you for being useless. Deal?"

Izuku smiled and nodded energetically, "Deal!"

Kaminari didn't hate him yet! He was giving him a chance! It took all Izuku's self control to hold back the grateful tears that threatened to fall, but he didn't want to ruin his chances at friendship by being a crybaby.

Kaminari smiled, dissipating the heavy atmosphere, "So, does this mean we're friends now? Because if so, I'm gonna need your number."

This time, Izuku couldn't hold back his tears, making Kaminari panic, "Oh no, what did I say?"

Damage Control

Chapter Summary

Shouta updates Amplifier and Tsukauchi.

Shouta really wished he could just crawl into his sleeping bag and pass out, but unfortunately he had *paperwork.* Maybe Tsukauchi would let him finish it another day? No, he'd pulled that yesterday, so if he skipped out again that would just mean more work later, which was illogical. None of that meant he had to be happy about having to listen to Amplifier's incessant rambling next to him, though.

"Yeah, so I still totally miss that bartender. I wonder what happened to him?" She said as she finished whatever story Shouta had been ignoring, "He had the most awesome quirk, too. I think it was called Remote Vision or something. Basically, as long as he knew where something was, he could see it. No one could get up to *anything* in that club."

"How's your redemption group going these ways?" Tsukauchi asked and Shouta sent him a half-hearted glare. The woman had just finished a story and now he was encouraging her to start a new one? Couldn't they just do their paperwork in peaceful silence?

"Pretty good, there's some real characters this time around." Amplifier said cheerfully. "We've also got this kid that volunteered to help out, which has been interesting."

"Oh?" Tsukauchi even sounded interested, the traitor. "What're they like?"

"He's a…," Amplifier sighed, "well, I can't really say he's a good kid, considering that I'm half-convinced the reason he wanted to volunteer was because he's trying to be less of an asshole. At least he wants to change, but I just wish I knew how to help him more."

"If he's actually trying to improve, then at least he's got *some* potential." Shouta couldn't help saying. "Half the kids I expel get kicked out because they're not willing to put in that kind of effort."

"Yeah, but he's a problem child." Amplifier whined. "It's been weeks, and I just barely got him to stop just standing by the wall the whole time and actually *talk* to people."

“Speaking of problem children, how’s yours doing, Eraser?” Tsuakuchi asked. “I don’t think anyone heard from Viridian last night. Do you think he’s going awol again?”

Shouta groaned loudly and dropped his head onto the desk in exhaustion and frustration, “Not unless he breaks his arm again.”

“Wait, the kid broke his arm?” Amplifier screeched so loud that Shouta had to sit up and cancel her quirk. “When did that happen?”

“Apparently, about five weeks ago.” Shouta sighed. “Kid didn’t tell me how it happened, but that’s why he’s been keeping off the streets. Well, until last night, when he apparently got bored and decided it was a good idea to go gallivanting on the rooftops in a cast.”

Amplifier snorted, “Yeah, that sounds like Viridian, alright. Reckless as ever.”

“Still, it’s good he didn’t go missing because of what we originally thought.” Tsukauchi pointed out. “Do you think you were overreacting about him being suicidal now that you’ve seen him again, Eraser?”

Shouta shook his head, “He *was* acting a little happier, but then…” He trailed off with a grimace. Yeah, yelling at a suicidal kid to stay alive hadn’t been his proudest moment. There had to have been better ways to get his point across without ruining what little trust the kid had in him, but there wasn’t anything he could do about that now except hope that he hadn’t ruined everything.

“Then what?” Amplifier asked. “What’s wrong.”

Shouta sighed, “We got in a fight.”

“You’re a hero, Eraser, getting into fights is what you do.” Tsukauchi deadpanned.

“Not with a villain.”

“Hold up.” Amplifier looked at him incredulously. “Are you saying you got into a fight with *Viridian?* What were you trying to do, arrest him?”

“I was trying to get him to drop it!” Shouta growled. “He...look, long story short, Queen Bee is back, which means that the villain factory is making a move, and Viridian is knee deep in it. He figured out that the bees were the injection method for our recent rash of instant

villains and went back to the scene during the day to recover one of them. Turns out they're robotic and can be hacked, which is something I need to bring up with Nedzu, but it's not something that a teenager should be poking around in."

"He's a vigilante." Amplifier argued. "Sticking his nose into things he shouldn't is pretty much what he does, you can't get mad at the kid for that."

"I know, I just," he sighed, "when he disappeared, I seriously thought the kid was dead. I was looking at obituaries just to make sure he wasn't in them! I don't want to have to go through that again, or worse, worry about him getting kidnapped and experimented on, just because he ran headfirst into a situation he wasn't equipped to deal with. Vigilantes deal with petty crime, not highly organized villain groups."

"You think the villain factory is going to start running experiments again?" Tsukauchi sounded worried. "Should we be expecting more next level villains?"

"The kid thinks the factory is probably moving onto the next phase in their experiment and I'm inclined to agree with him." Shouta said. "Whatever that next phase is, I can guarantee that it won't be pretty."

Tsukauchi let out a deep exhale, "Ok. I'll let the police know to be on high alert. If we see anything that even *seems* like it could be the villain factory, we'll let you know right away."

"Thanks." Shouta said. "Now I just need to get the kid to talk to me again, hopefully *after* he gets his cast off."

"Did he say when that was gonna be?" Amplifier asked. "As fun as it is to have him hack into my comms, I kinda miss seeing him around, and I know I'm not the only one. Even Rock Lock was complaining that he hadn't gotten an actual marble from him yet."

"It should be sometime this week." Shouta shrugged. "Kid didn't give me an exact day. He was too busy insisting that he was healed enough to be on the rooftops and I was too busy trying to get him to go home so he didn't break his arm again. It was a fun time."

Amplifier giggled, "Be careful, Eraser, your inner dad is showing."

"Actually, I think it's too late for that." Tsukauchi grinned. "He's got his heart on his sleeve, already."

Shouta glared at them, “I hate brats.”

“Sure thing.” Amplifier smiled mischievously. *“Eraserdad.”*

Shouta activated his quirk as Amplifier and Tsukauchi had the audacity to laugh at him, “Either get me coffee, or get the fuck out.”

Dr. Daruma Ujiko sighed as he looked at the feral...well, he couldn’t quite be called a man anymore, but the *thing* that was currently trying to cut through the bars to get at him. Despite their success in modifying the subjects’ bodies, the minds were another problem entirely. Or maybe it was just this specific subject. Crabs weren’t naturally the most intelligent creatures, after all.

The doctor didn’t have any problems forcing mutations in his subjects, especially not in subjects like this one that had a natural mutative aspect to their quirks. It was a simple enough task with a high enough quantity of trigger and other drugs, all of which Sensi was more than willing to provide. No, the problem came from the natural limits of the quirk itself. As many experiments as they ran, the increased quirk strength immediately returned to normal levels as soon as trigger was no longer being introduced into the system, which simply wouldn’t do at all. Sensei wanted a tool that could showcase his prowess at a moment’s notice without the need for constant assistance from chemicals, so that was what he would get.

To maintain the quirk’s strength without the drug, however, the quirk needed to be forced to achieve singularity. After his dismal failure trying to do this with drugs alone, however, Daruma had finally discovered a working solution making use of Sensei’s quirk. Sensei would take the quirk in question, then, making use of a multiplier quirk he had acquired a few decades ago, create multiple copies of the quirk all jumbled together and give them back to the subject.

Theoretically, the body should already be equipped to handle it’s own quirk, especially with the extra modifications that Daruma had added. Theoretically, the fact that it was the same quirk, only stronger, *should* bypass that annoying little glitch that Sensei had discovered centuries ago that caused brain damage in those that had multiple quirks forced into them. Theoretically, this should have been the last experiment necessary to create the perfect superhuman weapon.

In reality, theory only took one so far. While the brain recognized the modified quirk jumble as its own, it was still technically multiple quirks, which meant that the body attacked itself in an attempt to get

rid of what wasn't supposed to be there. The end result was that the subject was still capable of independent actions, but only those that were motivated by rage, since the emotional centers were largely undamaged by the experiments.

Which brought the doctor back to where he was now, looking at the monster he had created. The rage itself was not a problem, in fact, it simply made the monster more destructive, which would fit Sensei's goals well, but currently that rage was directed toward himself, which was far too dangerous.

Daruma sighed. It lacked the fineness of his normal experiments, but training and pain had been used to adjust the behavior of animals for centuries, and it would mould what was left of the monster's brain into what Sensei wanted. While not a complete success, the experiment *was* still useful, if only for how destructive this monster had the potential to be.

Now to make it follow orders.

Change

Chapter Summary

Izuku gets his cast off. Katsuki does some self-reflection.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Izuku couldn't help flinching slightly as the doctor took a literal power saw to his cast. He was fully capable of running at a villain with nothing but a soup can and a pair of sticks with no problem, but he was scared of a doctor who wasn't even trying to hurt him? What was up with that? Maybe it had something to do with adrenaline? Did people become less afraid during life-threatening situations so they didn't shut down?

It only took a few minutes for the doctor to finish cutting off the cast, "Alright, Midoriyas, you should be good to go. Just be careful in the future, because I don't want to see you back here, ok?"

"You really hate me that much?" Izuku couldn't help giggling,

"Doctors show they care by sincerely wishing they never see you again." The doctor said dryly. "If a doctor is excited for the next time you end up in their office, find a new doctor."

"Come on, Izuku," Mom smiled, "let's go."

"Wait!" Izuku bit his lip, "Could I keep my cast?"

The doctor looked mildly surprised, but handed it over without any questions and opened the door for them to leave.

"Thank you!" Izuku smiled and gave a little wave. He and Mom made their way back through the waiting room and Izuku couldn't hold back a little sigh of relief as soon as they got outside.

"Glad that's over?" Mom said with a smile.

"Yes!" Izuku said. "I'm so excited to have full use of both arms again!"

He was mostly excited because he would finally be able to be a vigilante again! He hadn't had the courage to go out since his fight

with Eraserhead, because he figured that the other heroes would have a similar reaction to his cast, and Eraser had probably told everyone about his broken arm by this point anyway, but he missed everyone. Sure, he didn't actually *talk* to most of the heroes, but it was still nice to see them when he was running away.

"Why did you want to keep the cast?" Mom asked. "I would have thought you'd want to put this whole thing behind you. The broken arm, the bullying, everything."

Izuku looked at the cast, or more specifically the signature on it, and smiled, "I do, but Kaminari signed this. That makes it special. And if I hadn't broken my arm, I wouldn't have ever thought to try online school, so...yeah. I guess it wasn't *all* bad."

Mom smiled, "I'm so proud of you, Izuku. You seem so much happier since we got you out of that school. How are classes going?"

Izuku spent the rest of the way home rambling about what he was learning in his classes. He was doing well in all his core classes, and his programming homework was really easy with all the extra practice he had gotten by hacking the cameras and comms as Viridian, not that he told Mom about that. But by far, his favorite classes were quirk theory. When he'd finished his art class, he'd ended up replacing it with a more advanced quirk theory credit so that he had two of them in his schedule. It was so much fun!

"...and there's this theory that's been gaining traction in the last few years called the *quirk singularity* theory, that basically believes that quirks will become more powerful and complex with every generation and soon, no one will be able to control them." Izuku rambled. "I see where they get the idea that quirks will become more complex, there's tons of evidence, but I think it's much more likely that people's bodies will evolve to control the more powerful quirks. That's probably why it's still a fringe theory, but it's got a dedicated fanbase."

Mom nodded along with interest even though Izuku knew that she didn't really know what he was talking about. It meant a lot to him that she listened though. No one else did that for him. Izuku couldn't help but wonder if Eraser or Kaminari would listen like this if he rambled around them. He knew it was probably too much to hope for, but...it would be nice.

"Hey, Bakugo!" Ogawa waved as Katsuki walked in with the water jug. "You should sit with us today! Unless you're too scared or

something?"

Katsuki wasn't a coward. Or, okay, maybe he was, but he wasn't about to let Ogawa get away with calling him one, "What did you say asshole? I'm not scared of some shitty extras like you!"

"Perfect!" Pigtails gestured to a chair next to her, "This is your seat."

Katsuki huffed and dropped heavily onto the offered chair, crossing his arms in a way that he hoped meant *don't talk to me if you want to live.* Unfortunately, something must have gotten lost in translation, because those stupid extras kept bothering him.

"By the way, Bakugo, I don't think I ever introduced myself." Pigtails said cheerily. "I'm Haru Akiko."

Katsuki filed the name away for later, "Don't care."

"And I'm Eiko Maki." Frankenstein-looking Extra said. "How was your week?"

"It was whatever." Katsuki grumbled. In truth, it was getting really annoying. He didn't know how he'd ever been stupid enough to miss all the bullying that happened at Aldera, but now that he knew to look for it and wasn't participating in it anymore, it seemed like it was everywhere and he couldn't do a thing about it. It made him feel powerless, and Katsuki *hated* feeling powerless.

"Yeah, mine too." Akiko said, "My ex tried coming back into my life. I mean, he's a jerk on a good day, don't know why I ever dated him, but he showed up out of the blue a few days ago, acting all smooth with a bouquet full of my favorite flowers."

"What did he want?" Ogawa asked.

"How do you know he wanted something?" Katsuki asked. Sue him, the story was more entertaining than standing against the wall.

"Guys like that always want something, kid." Maki said. "It's one thing to genuinely try to be better, like we're supposed to be doing here, but if someone that was rude to you all of a sudden starts being nice, they're just trying to make things go their way."

"My sister does it all the time." Ogawa said. "She'll offer to watch a movie with me, or do the dishes or something, and I think that we're finally gonna get along, then before I know it, she's trying to guilt me

into taking the fall for something she did. As soon as a manipulator gets what they want, they'll go right back to being an asshole."

"Hmm," Katsuki thought about it for a minute. Yeah, some of his teachers were like that with the bullied students. He'd noticed it once, when his history teacher had given a kid a higher grade on an assignment, as long as they didn't report the huge burn Katsuki had put on the kid's arm. At the time, he'd just thought the teacher was looking out for him, but he knew better now. "So what did the guy want?"

"Wanted me to break a safe he'd stolen." Akiko gestured to her pigtails and Katsuki noticed that they were spinning like drills. "My quirk is called Hair Drill. Basically, I can harden and rotate my hair to the point where I can puncture almost anything, even metal. Super useful for getting into things...which is how I ended up here."

Katsuki nodded along, wondering what Deku would think of that quirk. He'd probably start muttering immediately and write all sorts of gibberish in his notebook. Katsuki shut down that train of thought. He couldn't think about Deku right now, about how the nerd had actually transferred schools because of how Katsuki had treated him. There was no point in thinking about it because he wasn't ever going to see Deku again.

At least, not unless he ever got the balls to apologize.

"That sucks." Ogawa said. "At least you said no, right?"

"It was hard." Akiko grimaced. "As soon as I saw him at the door with a bright pink bouquet, I thought *oh, he even remembered my favorite color,* and I had to remind myself of all the ways he'd hurt me, even though he was acting so sweet that it made me think of all the reasons I'd fallen for him in the first place."

"He sounds like a dick." Katsuki said.

"Yeah, he kinda is." Akiko laughed. "But hey, if I knew that all I had to do to get you out of your shell was talk about my ex, I would've done that earlier."

Katsuki scowled, "Shut up, pigtail bitch."

The three had the audacity to laugh at that, but thankfully he was saved by Amplifier starting the meeting, "Alright, everyone, today we're gonna be talking about truly believing you can change, because

it's one thing to recognize that you've done something bad, but it's another thing entirely to really *know* that you can change the habits and behaviors that got you arrested. That confidence is important though. Why do you think that is?"

One of the villains raised their hand, "If we don't actually think it's gonna do anything, we're not gonna put in the effort to change."

"Exactly."

Amplifier smiled and kept talking, but Katsuki ended up lost in his own thoughts. Did he actually believe he could become a better person? That was the whole reason he was here, right? He wouldn't have volunteered for this sappy shit if he didn't actually think it would help.

But then again, he'd always believed he was the best, and look where that landed him. These villain extras might have made some bad decisions, but...they didn't seem like bad people, not like Katsuki was. He was knocked out of his thoughts by Ogawa elbowing him in the ribs and looking at him in curiosity and concern. Katsuki responded by glaring at him, but decided he'd better actually listen to what Amplifier was saying if he didn't want to be bothered again.

"We're gonna do a partner exercise for this," she said, "so turn to the person next to you. You don't have to say anything, but just think for a minute. Do you think that your partner is capable of becoming a better person?"

Katsuki rolled his eyes, but turned to Ogawa, who was looking at him intensely, probably deciding that he was a lost cause. Wasn't the point of this lesson to believe in *himself?* Of course Ogawa could change, that wasn't even a question. The guy may have made some stupid decisions and stolen some shit, but he was trying to be better and he wanted to turn his life around. He was a nice guy, so Katsuki didn't have any doubt that after this stupid program was over and his arrest record was wiped, Ogawa would go straight to being an upstanding citizen, unlike Katsuki, who would always be a stupid bully.

"Alright," Amplifier activated her quirk momentarily so she could speak loudly enough to catch all of their attention, "so you might be wondering why I had you do that. After all, believing in someone else's potential isn't going to help *you,* right? Well, yes and no. The fact is that it's often a lot easier to have patience and compassion toward someone else than it is to have it toward yourself. You and

your partner aren't so different, and if they can change, you can too. And now you have someone who believes in your potential! Go ahead and talk to your partner for a minute about what that exercise was like for you."

Ogawa laughed, "Man, did she just trick us into believing in ourselves?"

"What the fuck?" Katsuki was reeling slightly. It *did* make sense that he would probably be harsher on himself than he would be on the others in the group...but that was because Katsuki was supposed to be the best, right? The guilt and self-hatred he was feeling couldn't be *normal,* could they?

"For the record, Bakugo, I think she's right." Ogawa said. "I mean, I think it's pretty obvious that you can change, even if I don't know exactly why you feel like you need to, but me? All I can see is me falling back into my old habits the minute all this is over."

"Do you *want* to get punched?" Ok, that didn't come out right, but it got the point across. "You're a good person, Ogawa, so of course this stupid class is gonna work on you. If you think you're gonna go right back to a life of crime, you're a bigger idiot than you look."

Ogawa gave a shocked laugh, "You've got an interesting way of giving inspirational speeches, man, but it works. Thanks."

Katsuki huffed and turned away, "Whatever."

They sat in silence for a few seconds before Katsuki's brain to mouth filter apparently decided that it wanted to nope out, "Did you mean what you said?"

Ogawa looked slightly confused, "What? What did I say?"

Katsuki ran a hand through his hair, "Ugh! You know, that shit about it being obvious I can change. Was that bullshit or do you actually believe it?"

Katsuki was beginning to regret saying anything. Of course Ogawa was just saying that because it was what Amplifier told him to say. Even a blind guy would be able to see that Katsuki would always be an asshole.

"Of course I believe it, Bakugo." Ogawa looked like he thought Katsuki was an idiot. "You're what? Fifteen? You may be a little rough

around the edges, but you're not irredeemable. You're even going out of your way to become a better person, so no, I wasn't lying when I said I think you can change. You just need some time."

If Katsuki was the nerd, he probably would have started crying, so it was a good thing he wasn't Deku. Maybe, *just maybe,* Amplifier was telling the truth about it being easier to believe in someone else.

"I want to be a hero." Katsuki said impulsively. He'd said that so many times over the years, but he didn't think he'd even said it once since Deku left, so saying it felt important somehow. He hadn't felt worthy of it, but if Ogawa believed in him…

"Okay." Ogawa shrugged. "What does that have to do with anything?"

"Because I can't be a hero if I'm an asshole, dipshit!'

Ogawa laughed, "So that's why you're here? You want a bunch of villains to teach you to be a better hero?"

Katsuki scowled, "No, I couldn't give two shits about you extras. I just…"

"You want to be a better person." Ogawa finished.

"I don't…" Katsuki growled, "Look, I want to be like All Might, and All Might doesn't hurt people for fun or to make him feel better about himself. Happy?"

Ogawa blinked a few times in realization, "You were a bully."

"Don't know if you can really put in the past tense," Katsuki muttered, "I haven't changed yet."

Chapter End Notes

Here's a visual for the...well can you call them friends?...that Katsuki has made in the villain redemption program, plus Amplifier. Left to right, it's Maki, Akiko, Bakugo, Ogawa, and Amplifier.
Can I just say that I am super proud of this drawing? I am a much better writer than artist, so this is the first visual I've made for one of my stories where I didn't just trace a reference body! That being said, I wasn't trying for perfect anatomy, just acceptable, so there's that.

Back in Action

Chapter Summary

Viridian is officially back on the streets and getting into fights!

Izuku could hardly contain his excitement as he ran over the rooftops. Yes, logically, he knew that he had *technically* got out last week, but he hadn't actually been able to fight, so it didn't really count. He had gone to the beach that afternoon to practice with his slingshot and he had gotten a little rusty, so he should probably rely on his other weapons for now, at least until his aim improved again.

It took hardly any time at all to find a group of four men cornering a woman in an alley just outside Amplifier's territory and it took even less time to find the hero herself. She had her back to him as she walked her patrol route, so Izuku threw one of his marbles to get her attention. She looked around for a moment before she saw him, but when she did, her eyes lit up and she immediately started running for him. Izuku was so busy wondering why she looked so *happy* that he didn't have a chance to turn around and run away before she had wrapped her arms around him.

"Viridian!" she yelled. "You're back! How are you? How's your arm? Eraser said you broke it, are you ok?"

"Umm…" Izuku stared at her in shock. Again, l *ogically* he knew that Amplifier and the other heroes had missed him when he couldn't go out, but it was just so strange to actually *see* it. Somehow, Izuku had thought that they wouldn't really care if he came back back, or that his virtual vigilantism would count as his return , so no one would really make a big deal out of it when he finally got back onto the streets. It was...Izuku wasn't ready to deal with this, especially not when there were people to save. "I'm fine, but, um, we need to go?"

To her credit, Amplifier let go of him immediately and let him lead the way to the alley he'd seen. Since he hadn't been fighting for the past month and a half, Izuku let Amplifier take the lead. He was just planning on shooting a few marbles to distract the villains and let Amplifier take care of the rest, but then he saw the smallest of the four give her the slip and start to head toward the victim, stretching his arms like elastic to try to grab her.

Izuku ran to them and grabbed his pipes, bringing one down on the

villain's arm, then started twirling the pipe to wrap the arm around it like a noodle and trap him. He earned an elastic punch to the jaw for his trouble, forcing him to release his hold on the villain as he stumbled back. Izuku lowered himself into a fighting stance as he took a moment to regroup. Thankfully, the villain had taken his attention off the victim and was fully focused on him now, but that also meant that more attacks were going to be coming, and that first punch had hurt a lot more than a normal one, so the extra elasticity definitely gave his punches more power. So what could he do….?

Well, if the quirk worked like a rubber band, then there was a limit to how far the arms could stretch and they would turn brittle in the cold. He didn't really have access to anything cold right now, but if he could find the limit…

The villain reached to grab him, but Izuku dodged and started climbing up the fire escape. It was a risk, but he hadn't seen the villain use his quirk in his legs at all, so it was most likely limited to his arms, meaning that if he wanted to stop Izuku from getting away, he would have to stretch his arms to grab him. Of course, there was always the possibility that he'd think Izuku was simply no longer interested in fighting him, and he would try to fight Amplifier or hurt the victim, so Izuku would need to be prepared to get back down onto the street quickly if that happened.

He glanced down and smiled when he saw the villain reaching for him. He started climbing faster. If he could get onto the rooftop, then the villain would be reaching for him blindly and he might be able to find some way to use that to his advantage. He had to dodge the moment that his feet hit the roof as the arms grabbed for him, but he kept dodging and looking around the roof as the villain continued groping for him blindly.

There was a set of vertical poles with clothesline spread between them and Izuku's brain immediately formed a rough semblance of a plan as he ran toward them, grabbing one of the villain's hands as he did so and dragging it along with him. As he predicted, the villain immediately started reaching for him with his other hand, but Izuku was already prepared with zip ties. The moment that the second hand was in reach, he grabbed it and tied them together on the far side of the pole. Hopefully that would hold the villain long enough for Izuku to…

His eyes widened as he heard a scream coming closer to him and he whipped his head around to see the villain flying at him, which is

when he remembered that when rubber bands were stretched to their limits, they tended to snap back. Oops.

There was a loud clang and Izuku finched as the villain hit the pole. He ran over to check on the guy, who had obviously been knocked unconscious, but he still had a pulse, so Izuku hadn't messed up too badly. He didn't know what he'd do if he'd killed the guy.

Well, it hadn't exactly been the takedown he'd planned, and it wasn't the cleanest, but Izuku wasn't about to complain as he climbed back down the fire escape. Amplifier had taken down two of the thugs in the time it had taken Izuku to handle one, and she was currently fighting the last guy, who seemed to be giving her a little trouble. Every time she landed the punch, the villain didn't even flinch. It was like she wasn't hitting him with any more force than a love tap.

"Viridian! Get out of here and get Eraser!" She yelled. "This guy has some sort of shock absorption quirk."

Izuku nodded and started running. The villain tried to run after him, but Amplifier got between them. He heard her getting thrown against the wall, so picked up the pace. He didn't know how long she would be able to hold against a villain like that, but as long as she focused on dodging instead of fighting, she should be able to drag the fight out long enough for him to get back. Now, to get on the rooftops and find Eraser.

He ended up being only a block or two away, thankfully, and as soon as Izuku saw him, he loaded a marble into his slingshot and fired. Hopefully Eraser would forgive him if he got a bruise, but they didn't have time for Izuku to run across three extra rooftops to get in range to throw the marble manually. He didn't look back as he ran back to the fight, knowing that Eraser would follow him and sure enough, by the time he could hear the sounds of the fight again, he could hear Eraser falling into step beside him.

"What's up, kid?" he asked. "You're in more of a hurry than usual."

"Shock...absorption….Amplifier...help…" Apparently, he was a little out of shape from his forced vacation, or else he was pushing himself way harder than he normally did, because he didn't even have enough breath to make himself intelligible. Eraser seemed to understand well enough, however, because he ran ahead, following the sounds of the fight, and Izuku saw him disappear down into the alley with his quirk already activated.

Izuku himself stopped at the edge of the roof to catch his breath, knowing that he wouldn't be much use in the fight if he was this exhausted. He would just get in the way of the heroes, which was the last thing he wanted to do. He sat down on the edge and watched what was left of the takedown, which was basically just Eraserhead grabbing the villain with his capture weapon, then hitting his head against the wall to knock him out, which worked pretty well now that the guy couldn't just absorb the impact. Izuku got up and stretched for a minute before turning to go find another crime.

"Viridian, wait."

Izuku turned to see Eraser pull himself up onto the roof with his capture weapon, "Shouldn't you be waiting for the police, Eraser? Oh! I left one of the guys on another rooftop."

"Amplifier mentioned something about that." Eraser's mouth was hidden by his capture weapon, but he sounded amused. "She said the guy literally *launching* himself into the air gave her an opening to take out one of the others."

Izuku grimaced, "I really didn't mean to do that."

Eraser let out a huff that sounded suspiciously like laughter, "Sure you didn't."

"I was just trying to tie him up, I swear!" Izuku insisted, but he was smiling now too. "It's not my fault he stretched too far trying to catch me!"

"Good work, problem child."

Izuku's eyes widened as Eraserhead reached forward and rubbed his head, ruffling his hair under his hood. What? No one was ever proud of him! Well, maybe except his mom, but even that felt like a relatively recent development. Izuku couldn't help the shocked little smile as he looked up at Eraser, who seemed as tired and grumpy as ever, but also seemed awkward, like he was about as used to expressing pride as Izuku was to receiving it.

After a second, Eraser took his hand back and sighed, "Kid, let's go somewhere where the police aren't going to try to grab you. We need to talk."

Suicide

Chapter Summary

I love this chapter so much

Chapter Notes

So, um, I impulsively made a tiktok as Clouds where I can ramble about my writing! I'm @clouds_notcomingdown.

Izuku couldn't help the pool of dread in his stomach as he followed Eraserhead across the rooftops. What had he done? Was Eraser really going to force him to stop vigilantism? But if he was going to force him to stop, then why didn't he just hand him over to the police? Not that the police were actually going to be able to stop him, considering that he wasn't *technically* breaking any vigilantism laws, but still, that would have been the easiest course of action and Eraserhead was logical enough to see that. So what was he doing?

When they were a few blocks away from where the fight had been, Eraserhead stopped and turned around, "I wanted to apologize."

Izuku's spiraling thoughts stuttered to a stop, "What?"

Eraserhead sighed., "Last week, when I saw you, I yelled at you trying to get you to stop. I was worried and scared, but that's no excuse. I shouldn't have gotten angry with you, and I'm sorry."

"But…" Izuku was shocked, "But you didn't do anything wrong! It's me who should be apologizing! I mean, I was just being stupid and I really shouldn't have gone out with a broken arm anyway, but I did what you said!"

"It wasn't about the arm, though we will be talking about that later," Eraser started, then did a double take, "Wait, what did I say?"

"Um, you told me to make a friend?" Izuku said, but then his eyes widened as he realized he couldn't *actually* remember what Eraser had said, "Wait, maybe you didn't actually tell me to make a friend...maybe you just said that you were worried I didn't have any friends? I could have sworn, but...did you even say that…?"

"You...what?" Eraser seemed tired and confused, but not unhappy, "You went out and made a friend because you thought I told you to?"

Well, when he said it like that, it sounded silly, "...yes?"

Eraser snorted and Izuku blushed, "Hey! It's not like it's a bad thing!"

"Didn't say it was." Eraser sounded like he was smiling, "So, you get along ok?"

"Mhm!" Izuku grinned, "He doesn't care about...well, he's different than the kids at my old school, and he's actually giving me a chance. His quirk is really cool too, though it has kind of a big drawback. I wonder if I could help him with that somehow…"

Shouta hid a small smile as Viridian started muttering unintelligibly. He couldn't believe that the problem child had interpreted his trying to keep him alive as a challenge to make a friend, but he wasn't unhappy about it. Seriously, the kid needed some more positive influences in his life, which brought Shouta back for the real reason behind this talk, "I'm glad I could help you make a friend, problem child, but that's not why I wanted to talk to you."

Viridian froze and looked up at Shouta, obviously frightened. He didn't want to scare the kid, but it was a pretty heavy talk. Shouta sighed and sat down on the roof, gesturing for Viridian to sit down beside him. Actually, on second thought, a roof probably wasn't the best place for this kind of conversation, but it was too late to change locations now. The kid hesitated for a long moment before sitting down, still obviously nervous and not taking his eyes off Shouta for a moment. Damn, this kid really *was* expecting to be hurt.

He took a deep breath, "People would care if you died, kid."

Viridian froze again, obviously not expecting that. Shouta sighed, "I know that this isn't the easiest thing to talk about, and you don't have to talk about it with me, but you should be talking about it with *someone*. I think it's pretty obvious just by the way you fight that you don't care if you die, but our argument the other day really cinched it. Viridian...you're suicidal, aren't you?"

The kid stared at him for a long moment, then burst into tears. Oh no, Shouta had been expecting a denial, or a deflection, or even just sad acceptance. He didn't know what to do with a crying kid! Maybe he should have left this to another hero? Mic was so much better with people than he was! Shouta awkwardly started rubbing the kid's back. That was something people did, right? It was supposed to be comforting, wasn't it?

After about a minute, a choked-sounding chuckle broke through Viridian's sobbs, "That kinda ruins the plan, Eraserhead."

Shouta's hand stopped moving and he felt his stomach drop. The kid had a plan? Yeah, he knew that might be a possibility, but he'd been hoping that the kid wasn't at that stage of things yet, "What plan, kid?"

"No one was supposed to know." Viridian smiled sadly, "This whole vigilantism thing...If people knew I killed myself, it would cause too many problems. My childhood friend would get in trouble for suicide baiting me, my mom would blame herself…" he chuckled humorlessly, "Guess that's kinda a stupid reason not to just take a swan dive, huh?"

"I don't think any reason to stay alive is stupid." Eraser said seriously, though he would have to ask more about that *childhood friend* if he could get the kid to trust him a little more. "So, the plan was that if you got killed…"

"When." Viridian interrupted, "When I get killed, everyone will just think, *oh, the useless deku was being an idiot and trying to be a hero again, no wonder he got himself killed,* not *oh no, why did he commit suicide.* But, uh, you knowing the plan kinda ruins it."

"What about me wanting you to stay alive?" Shouta asked gently. "Does that ruin the plan too?"

He heard Viridian's breath hitch slightly, but when he spoke again, his voice was resigned, "You're only saying that because it's your job as a hero to save me."

"I don't say things I don't mean, kid, you know that." Shouta countered. "When I say that I like you better alive, it's because it's the truth. You're a good kid. You're smart, you pick things up quickly, and you've got a lot of potential. I'd be sad to see you throw all that away."

Viridian shook his head, "You'll move on, just like Mom will. It won't take you long after I'm gone before you realize how useless I was, and then you'll realize I made the right decision. You don't have to feel guilty about that, though! I won't blame you guys or anything."

"You're not useless, kid." Shouta said earnestly. "You've helped a lot of people these last couple months, and even if you hadn't, you're still just a kid. You shouldn't have to do anything to justify being alive!"

Viridian shrugged, “Agree to disagree.”

Shouta rolled his eyes, “Doesn’t apply in this situation, problem child.”

To his surprise, Viridian gave him a shit-eating grin and looked him right in the eye, “Agree to disagree.”

Izuku was surprised that he was apparently confident enough to joke around with Eraser, but now that the whole wanting-to-die thing was out in the open, it was like he didn’t have anything left to lose. It was like a huge weight had been lifted off his chest and he was able to relax. Not that he wasn’t still terrified that Eraser was going to abandon him, because he *was,* but it was like his reason for being a vigilante had been this huge wall between them, and talking about it had torn it down, somehow. Or maybe he was just using humor as a coping mechanism. That was a distinct possibility.

Eraser muttered something that sounded suspiciously like *teenagers* before gripping Izuku’s shoulder and turning him slightly so they were face to face, “I would care if you died, problem child, and so would a lot of other people. What would your new friend think if you suddenly disappeared?”

Izuku bit his lip as he thought of Kaminari, “He’d get over it. He has a lot of other friends, he’d barely even notice I was gone.”

Eraser sighed, but let go of him and went back to staring at the skyline. They sat in silence for a few minutes before he spoke again, “I used to be depressed too, you know.”

Izuku looked at Eraser with wide eyes, “...what?”

Eraser nodded and kept looking out at the city, “When I was around your age, a close friend of mine was killed in action during a work study. I...never really got over it, at least, not completely. I cut myself off from everyone, even Present Mic who was close to him too. Nothing seemed worth it anymore.”

Izuku couldn’t believe it, “But...you’re so strong…”

“You can be strong and still be sad, kid.” Eraser said quietly, “A lot of heroes go through it. Sometimes there’s something that leads to it, like there was with me, but sometimes, things just don’t work right in your brain and that’s that. It’s not something you need to be ashamed of, but it *is* something you should get help for.”

“I don’t deserve to get help.” Izuku muttered.

“Why not?”

Izuku looked at Eraser again to find that he had taken off his yellow goggles and hung them around his neck so Izuku could see his sincere expression. He couldn’t believe it, but Eraser seemed to genuinely care. It was confusing.

Izuku took a deep breath. If Eraser could open up about his friend, maybe Izuku could open up too, just a little, “I can’t do anything.” He picked at the fraying threads around the hole in his jeans as a way to avoid looking at Eraser. “I don’t want to waste a therapist’s time when the world would be better off without me in it anyway.”

“‘Who told you that?” Eraser sounded slightly angry. “Who told you that the world would be better off without you in it? Was it that childhood *friend* you mentioned before?”

“It wasn’t just him.” Izuku said. “I mean, he was a part of it, but the other kids at school said the same thing and even some of the teachers. Only a few of them would say it to my face, though, but I heard some of their conversations when I passed by the teacher’s lounge. I even got yelled at by an old man on the train once.”

“Kid…”

“It’s fine though.” Izuku’s voice cracked, but he smiled anyway. “They were right, even if I didn’t want to believe it at first. At least this way, I can still help some people before I go, right?”

“Just because everyone believes something doesn’t make it true, kid.” Eraser put a hand on his shoulder, which made Izuku lose control of his tears and start crying again. “Sometimes, actually most of the time, people are idiots. No one deserves to be told to die, especially not a kid. How long has this been going on?”

Izuku shrugged. He couldn’t just say it was since he was four, because that would make it obvious that it was because of his lack of a quirk and despite his decision to open up to Eraser, Izuku didn’t think he would be able to handle it if Eraser abandoned him once it came out that he was quirkless.

So instead, he changed the subject, “What did you do to get better after your friend died? Because, well, you don’t seem like you’re depressed anymore.”

Eraser glared at him, but Izuku just gave him a small smile, so he sighed and accepted the new topic, “I threw myself into saving people, just like you have. Living for other people works pretty well, until you learn how to live for yourself again.”

“You’re saying it like saving people is a crutch.”

Eraser shrugged, “Maybe it is. You’ve got other reasons too, I’m sure, but while you seem to be fighting villains as a way to kill yourself, it also seems to be giving you something to live for, at least for now.”

Izuku thought about that for a moment. He *did* wake up each morning excited for the next night, which wasn’t something he’d ever experienced before becoming a vigilante. He enjoyed spending time with the heroes, even if most of that time was spent fighting or running away, which was way different than his former classmates. He looked forward to saving people, and the extra exercise probably didn’t hurt either.

“Let’s say your right,” Izuku said finally, “what are you going to do about it?”

“As much as I want to wrap you in bubble wrap and force you to stop, I’m not willing to take away the one thing you’re living for.” Eraser grumbled. “I just want you to promise me that you won’t do anything impulsive, ok? If you have a lead, *especially* about the villain factory, tell me. And if things get worse and you feel like waiting for a villain to kill you is taking too long…you can talk to me, understood?”

Izuku stared at him with wide eyes, “R-really?”

Eraser rolled his eyes, but rubbed Izuku’s head fondly, “Yeah, kid. Leaving a suicidal kid to fight his emotions alone would be completely illogical, not to mention dangerous, and I’d much rather read your notebook than your obituary. I like having you around, kid.”

Izuku sniffled and turned away from Eraser so he could wipe his eyes, “I, uh, I guess I’ll see you later then?”

It was dark, so maybe Izuku was just imagining Eraser’s smile as they got to their feet, “Sure thing, kid. Now go find another hero to pelt with marbles, some of the others are getting jealous.”

Izuku laughed and ran toward the edge of the roof before he remembered something and stopped, “Eraser?”

“What, kid?”

“Um, that friend you mentioned in high school, the one that was the catalyst for your depression, um,” Izuku hesitated, “how did he die?”

Eraser had put his goggles back on, so Izuku couldn’t read his expression as well, but he thought he looked sad, “I’ll tell you later, kid. For now, just focus on staying alive.”

Electricity

Chapter Summary

Izuku analyzes Kaminari's quirk

Chapter Notes

Look at this amazing art by Paranoid Pug on our discord! They also did this doodle.

Izuku couldn't stop thinking about Kaminari's quirk. There was a familiar feeling of nostalgia that reminded him of when Kacchan's quirk had first manifested, before they found out that Izuku was quirkless. He'd thrown himself head first into figuring out Kacchan's explosions and imagining how they'd be useful for hero work.

It made this whole thing with Kaminari bitter-sweet, because Izuku wanted to be overwhelmingly, deliriously happy that he was analyzing a friend's quirk, but he couldn't shake the dull feeling of dread that bubbled up in his stomach every time he thought of it, like he was just waiting for the other shoe to drop. And to make the whole thing worse, he felt guilty that he hadn't been able to keep this dynamic with Kacchan, because it was his fault that they'd grown apart. If Izuku hadn't been born quirkless, then maybe they would still be friends and Izuku would still be analyzing Kacchan's quirk to help him get into UA.

He pushed those feelings down again, determined to ignore them. Eraser had said it was ok to be sad, but Izuku didn't want to waste whatever time he had left feeling sorry for himself. Instead, he went back to thinking about Kaminari's limit. They'd texted a few times since they officially became friends a few weeks ago, and from those conversations, Izuku got the idea that Kaminari tended to think it was better to go over his limit right at the beginning of a fight in an attempt to end things early. His line of thinking was that his brain was going to fry itself eventually, so he may as well take out his opponent before that happened.

Izuku didn't necessarily agree. Sure, every hero had special moves that almost always ended a fight, but the key word there was *almost* always. There would always be villains who had quirks able to counter him and there would always be factors like civilians and hostages that prevented him from going all out. According to all the

fights Izuku had watched and been in, Kaminari's best bet wasn't to end the fight quickly, but to figure out how to fight in an endurance match. But how was he supposed to do that when he couldn't direct his own electricity?

There didn't seem to be much point to him trying to shoot lightning at an opponent, because Kaminari had said the electricity would just go everywhere and hurt anyone around, but it was also a good thing the electricity went everywhere because his limit would be more than enough to kill someone if it were more concentrated, like, say, if he were in direct….contact….with...them…

Izuku's eyes widened and he immediately shot a text to Kaminari to meet him at the park after school, then got out the notebook he'd dedicated to Kaminari's quirk and started making a plan.

Denki was confused. He'd been at lunch when Midoriya had texted him wanting to meet asap, but then there hadn't been any follow-up texts. The text itself wouldn't have been that strange on it's own, but it *was* strange coming from Midoirya. In the few short weeks since they'd started hanging out, Denki had slowly realized that Midoriya never asked for anything. He let Denki be in charge of when and how often they hung out, almost like he was afraid that he'd stop talking to him if he ever pushed for what he actually wanted, so an urgent text like this was completely out of character and more than a little worrying.

What if something was wrong? What if Midoriya was in trouble? What if he needed Denki to help him get out of an abusive situation or something? Was he even smart enough to help him? What if he wasn't? Oh, no, what if that was why this meeting was urgent? What if Midoriya had gotten tired of how stupid he was and decided that he didn't want to be friends with him anymore?

Denki didn't know if he would be able to handle that. Despite what his mom said about him being a social butterfly, he didn't really have that many close friends. Sure, he could make friends pretty easily, but most of his classmates didn't have the patience to deal with his dumb jokes and short attention span or they thought he was too clingy, so they never really got past the *casual acquaintance* stage like Midoriya had. Denki didn't want to think about what he would do if Midoriya said he didn't want to be friends anymore.

A part of him knew that he was being silly. Midoriya had *asked* to be

his friend, and he'd admitted that he didn't have any other friends, so he probably wasn't going to voluntarily end things just because Denki was annoying. As much as he told himself that, however, it didn't stop his brain from trying to convince him that Midoriya absolutely hated him and he was such a terrible human being that having zero friends was preferable to being friends with him.

He didn't even go home to change out of his uniform before running to the park, only to find that Midoriya was already waiting for him in casual clothes. How did he already have time to change out of his school uniform? Wait, did Midoriya even go to school? He was really smart, so he had to go, but he had never mentioned which middle school he went to. Denki shook his head. He could worry about that later, for now, he needed to figure out what was wrong with his friend.

Midoirya was practically vibrating with energy. Even as he waited, he couldn't stop moving and he was either bouncing in place, or pacing back and forth. Denki's first thought was that he must be nervous, but that didn't seem right, because, despite his constant movement, Midoriya didn't seem distressed. In fact, he seemed almost *excited* about something.

As soon as he caught sight of Denki, Midoriya ran toward him with a huge smile on his face, "A human taser!"

Denki took a small step back, a little overwhelmed by Midoirya's enthusiasm, which was saying something considering his own quirk and personality. But if Midoriya was smiling, then he probably still wanted to be friends, which was one worry crossed off the list, but Denki was still a little lost about what his friend had just said, "What?"

"A human taser!" Midoriya took a notebook out of his backpack and started flipping through the pages, "We've been thinking about your quirk all wrong! You've been thinking about it like a tesla coil or even a lightning generator, but that's not it! You can't shoot lightning like Electroplant, because your quirk isn't like that! You're a human taser!"

Denki blinked a few times to give his mind a second to catch up, only to realize he was still lost, "Midoriya, buddy, you are making absolutely zero sense."

Now that he thought about it, Midoriya was probably one of those people who had problems communicating when they got excited.

Their brains moved so fast that their mouths couldn't keep up and they had no idea how to say what wason their minds without it getting jumbled around. Knowing that didn't make him magically understand what Midoriya was trying to say, however. In fact, it just made him feel *more* stupid. If Midoriya was explaining this to someone of average intelligence, they probably would have gotten it by now.

Midoriya was still vibrating with energy as he attempted to explain, "You can't shoot your lightning!"

He said it like the conclusion should be obvious, and maybe to him it was, but Denki still had no idea what he was trying to say. Of course he couldn't shoot his lightning, that had been one of the first things he'd told Midoriya about his quirk.

"You already knew that, dude." Denki reminded him, "It's not new information."

"No! It's just..." Midoirya seemed to be getting frustrated by this point, but Denki didn't know if it was from his own trouble communicating his thoughts, or Denki's complete inability to understand them. Denki's stomach sank as he realized it was probably the latter.

Suddenly, Midoriya's eyes brightened like he'd just had an idea. "Attack me!'

If there was a human equivalent of a bluescreen, Denki was it. "What?"

Midoriya looked even *more* excited, if that was possible, "Attack me!"

"But," Denki was so confused, "I'll hurt you…"

"That's the point, I'll be fine." Midoriya said dismissively, like he hadn't casually just told Denki to injure him, "Now come on and attack me!"

Denki shrugged and charged up for his finishing move. At least the command was easy to understand, "It's your funeral."

"No, not like that!" Midoriya held up his hands for him to stop, "Hit me!"

"Um…" Denki looked down at his hands before deactivating his quirk, "Ok?"

He obediently threw a weak punch, but Midoirya redirected it immediately. He was a small guy, so Denki had just kinda assumed he didn't know how to fight, but the way Midoriya reacted to his attack made it seem like he was almost bored, like he'd fought guys twice his size for fun. Oh, and Denki was still confused. What was the point of asking him to punch him if he wasn't even going to land a hit?

Midoriya, however, was grinning, a manic look in his eyes, "Perfect! Now hit me again, but this time, electrify your arm slightly. You should only need a few hundred volts to do what I'm thinking, so don't try to go over your limit just yet, ok?."

Denki did what he was told and charged his arm with barely any electricity, or at least it felt like barely any in comparison to his finishing move, and threw a second punch at Midoriya. Considering that this punch wasn't any stronger than the last one had been, Denki was fully expecting an identical result. This time, however, when Midoirya tried to block the punch, his body seized up and Denki was able to push past his arm and punch him in the face, which immediately launched Midoriya to the ground.

"Oh no, what did I do?" Denki knelt to help Midoriya up, stopping at the last minute with his hands hovering uselessly over his friend's body as he remembered that his body was still charged with electricity. "Dude, are you ok? Please say you're ok!"

Midoriya groaned and sat up with a dorky smile on his face, "See, Kaminari? You've only been thinking of your quirk in terms of long distance combat, so you've been blind to it's real possibilities! You'll be able to do the most damage in close range where you can touch your opponent! You're a human taser!"

Denki stared at his hand, sparks arcing between his fingers, "Holy shit..."

"You've been focusing on raising your limit so you don't fry your brain," Midoriya said, "but if you can touch your opponent, you won't even *need* your whole limit, because even a tiny bit of electricity will go a long way. The person themselves should act as a lightning rod of sorts and attract all your electricity to them, which means you won't be wasting as much electricity uselessly electrifying the air around you."

Denki's mind raced as he considered the possibilities, "So...what now?"

Midoriya grinned and jumped to his feet, “Now I’m going to teach you how to fight.”

Conviction

Chapter Summary

Katsuki gets some positive influences.

Chapter Notes

Check out this awesome fanart of Kaminari from last chapter by Ray.

After his stupid confession during the last meeting, Katsuki was fully expecting Ogawa to never talk to him again. It just made sense, since hanging around someone like him would only drag the others down when they were trying to be better. So Katsuki was understandably a little bit angry when that damn idiot waved him over with a giant grin on his face the moment he walked through the door.

He stormed over to Ogawa, who was sitting next to Maki and Akiko just like the last few times, and barely avoided the habit of grabbing him by his shirt to be intimidating. Instead, he glared down at him, “What the fuck are you doing? After last time, I thought it’d be pretty clear that I’d just drag you down. Go find someone else to bother, you damn moron.”

Ogawa just laughed and stood, throwing a hand around Katsuki’s shoulders, “Man, you must have some wires crossed or something, Bakugo, because that wasn’t clear at all. Maybe you need to work on your communication skills.”

“What happened last time?” Akiko asked as she popped a piece of bubble gum in her mouth.

Ogawa smiled cryptically, “We solved a mystery!”

“Ooh, I like mysteries.” Maki leaned forward in his seat eagerly, an action that was slightly intimidating due to his size. “What mystery did you solve?”

“None of your goddamn business.” Katsuki threw Ogawa’s arm off him, “Now leave me alone you stupid extras!”

He started to stalk away, but stopped in his tracks when he heard Ogawa’s voice behind him, “We discovered why Katsuki volunteered to be here.”

Katsuki froze. He didn't know what he was expecting. Yeah, it wasn't like he'd told Ogawa to keep it a secret, but he'd thought it was implied. Not that he'd actually said anything yet, but he probably would. How would the other two react? What would Amplifier think if she overheard? What if she told UA? What if his own idiocy ruined any chance he had to be the best hero? Katsuki should have kept his stupid mouth shut.

"What are you so stressed about, Bakugo?" Akiko laughed. "We already figured you'd done something sketchy, so what does it matter if Ogawa knows what it was?"

Bakugo whirled around to glare at her, "Shut up! You don't know shit!"

"Hey, calm down, man!" Ogawa put a hand on his shoulder, "I'm not gonna tell them anything if you don't want me to. But I really think you should tell them. It'll help."

Maki nodded, "Take it from me, having people in your corner can make all the difference in a fight."

"Yeah, and keeping secrets isn't gonna do you any favors." Akiko added. "If you go into a heist with incomplete information, you're just gonna get people killed. If you want our help, you gotta be honest."

"I didn't ask for your help!" Katsuki flexed his hands, as much to ground himself as to be intimidating. Only weak people needed help, and Katsuki couldn't be weak if he wanted to be a hero. He had to do this alone, even if it was impossible.

Ogawa squeezed the hand on his shoulder, "You may not have asked for our help, but even you can admit it'll make things easier. This is a rehabilitation *group* for a reason. No one should have to go through this alone."

Katsuki scowled. Maybe Ogawa had a point, but he still didn't deserve their help. They were the ones that needed their arrest records wiped, and they couldn't afford to get dragged down by a stupid, cruel gradschool bully.

"Alright everyone!" Amplifier's quirk-amplified voice echoed around the room, "It's almost time to start, so go ahead and find your seats."

Katsuki made to stalk off to stand against the wall, but Ogawa grabbed his arm and dragged him into the chair right next to his, then

leaned over to mutter in his ear, “We’ll talk about this later, but just think about it, ok?”

Katsuki scoffed and rolled his eyes, then folded his arms and slouched in his seat as Amplifier began the meeting. He didn’t deserve their help anyway. He couldn’t say anything.

“Today, each of you are going to be making a personal commitment to change.” Amplifier said. “It’s one thing to say you’re gonna change because the government is making you, but it’s another thing entirely to make that commitment to yourself.”

“Yeah.” Maki whispered to him. “Real change comes within. Nobody is going to force you to be someone else.”

“Shut up.” Katuski hissed back. “I don’t need your stupid help.”

Amplifier either hadn’t heard their whispered argument or, more likely, had decided to ignore it, “Alright, Bakugo would you help me pass out some papers?”

Katsuki grunted an affirmation and stood up, grateful to get away from the group of villains that had apparently decided to adopt him. He grabbed the stack of blank notebook paper that Amplifier had gestured to from the table and started handing everyone a few sheets as Amplifier passed around a cup of mismatched pens.

Even though he was helping and doing the volunteer work he was technically there for, Katsuki still felt like shit. It wasn’t his fault that the stupid paper reminded him of Deku’s stupid notebooks, which reminded him of stupid Deku and all the other stupid extras he’d hurt over the years. All the more reason to not get too close to anyone here. If he didn’t get close to Ogawa and the others, he couldn’t hurt them.

Once everyone had some paper and a pen, Amplifier gestured for Katsuki to sit back down. Unfortunately, she gestured to the same seat next to Ogawa that he’d just gotten up from, so he didn’t have any excuse to distance himself. He glared at her and she shot him a smile. That bitch definitely knew what she was doing. He huffed and slumped down heavily as Amplifier went to the front of the room.

“Ok! So, this is an individual exercise, but you’re welcome to talk amongst yourselves if you want.” Amplifier grinned at Ogawa, who was grinning back. “You’re going to write a letter. This can be to yourself, to someone important to you, or to no one at all, but in this

letter, you are going to commit to be better. Be as sincere as you can in your conviction. Don't make any promises that you don't actually want to keep. Everybody ready? Begin!"

"No wonder they always recruit her to announce stuff." Akiko popped her bubblegum loudly. "She does it without even trying."

"She might just be so used to being an announcer because of her quirk that she talks that way out of habit." Ogawa suggested.

"You've got a point." Akiko admitted. "Ah, if only we lived in a world where we weren't type cast based on our quirks."

"I'll drink to that." Maki laughed. "So, kid, who are you gonna write to?"

Katsuki scowled, "Who said I was gonna write anything at all?"

"You'll only be shooting yourself in the foot if you don't, man." Ogawa pointed out. "These exercises are supposed to help us all become better. You can't just not do the work and still expect to reach your goals."

"Why the fuck are you extras so set on helping me?" Katsuki griped. "I'm not a good person."

"Neither are we, kid." Maki set a giant hand on his shoulder. "That's kinda the point."

"Yeah, Bakugo, none of us are gonna win person of the year or anything." Akiko shrugged. "That's why we gotta be there for each other, right? We have to have somebody to trust in this crazy, messed up world, right?"

Katsuki scowled and glared at all three of them, but the most annoying part of all this was that they seemed so sincere. Like they actually thought he could be better or something. But, well, maybe Akiko had a point. Both her and Ogawa had become villains because important people in their lives had pushed them toward it, and Katsuki would have realized how horrible he was earlier if it wasn't for his stupid teachers and classmates always telling him he was the best. Maybe if he had some people who were also assholes trying to be better, then that might not be the worst thing in the world, right?

He huffed and grabbed a pen, "Whatever. So who are you gonna write to?"

“My ex.” She grinned savagely. “It’s basically gonna be a giant screw you, you know?”

Katsuki found himself laughing alongside the others, “Yeah, fuck him, I guess. What about you guys?”

“I’m writing to my dad.” Maki said. “He died a couple years back and I didn’t get to see him while he was in the hospital cause I was in prison. Not cleaning up my act in time for him to see it is probably one of my biggest regrets. Obviously a letter isn’t gonna fix anything, but it just seems fitting, you know?”

“You guys all picked meaningful people.” Ogawa pouted. “And I’m over here just writing to myself.”

Katuski hit him over the head, “Shut up. You’re trying to be better because it’s what you want, right? So why would you write your stupid committment to anybody else? Idiot.”

Ogawa blinked a few times, “I hadn’t thought of it like that, man. I guess writing to myself isn’t as silly as I thought, huh?”

“Of course it isn’t.” Maki smiled gently. “It’s *your* conviction, isn’t it?”

“I guess so.” Ogawa laughed. “So what about you, Bakugo? Who are you gonna write to?”

Katsuki thought about it for a minute. His first thought was to write the letter to All Might, but that didn’t seem right somehow. Yeah, he wanted to be like All Might, but he was a celebrity that Katsuki had never met. If he was gonna write to someone else, it needed to be someone personal, someone that he wanted to be better for, someone like…

“Deku.”

“Deku?” Akiko frowned. “You’ve got weird friends, Bakugo. What kind of parents name their kid *useless?”*

“His parents didn’t give him that name,” Katsuki couldn’t meet anyone’s eye, “I did.”

“I don’t get it.” Maki said. “Is he your little brother or something?”

“No…ugh, shit!” Katsuki hissed. “You know how you guys were talking about being typecast because of your quirks?”

“Yeah?” Akiko looked at him strangely. “What does that have to do with anything?”

Katsuki sighed, “How do you think a quirkless kid would be cast?”

Her eyes widened as she put the pieces together, “Oh…”

“He was the kid you bullied, wasn’t he?” Ogawa asked gently.

“One of them.” Katsuki grumbled. “But Deku got the worst of it. We used to be friends before our quirks came in, but mine was strong. Everybody said it was perfect for a hero, and I guess they all bent over backwards so I wouldn’t get in trouble for any of the shit I pulled. I don’t know what I was thinking, but he was supposed to be weaker than me, so for some reason I was convinced I had to put him in his place. He ended up dropping out of school because of it.”

“Whoa.” Maki breathed. “Nobody ever stopped you?”

Katsuki chuckled humorlessly, “Why would they? Deku was just a quirkless weakling. He couldn’t bring fame or honor to the school, so why would it matter if a kid like that got a few bruises or burns? Honestly, my teachers probably need these classes more than you guys do.”

“Have you seen him recently?” Akiko asked. “Since you started coming here?”

Katsuki shook his head, “I’m not gonna even try to seek him out until I’m ready to apologize and actually mean it. Anything else would just hurt him even more, and I feel like I’ve done that enough already.”

“So that’s what you write!” Ogawa smiled and clapped Katsuki on the back. “You tell this kid that you’re gonna become a better person so that one day you can make amends in person.”

He pushed a piece of paper toward him, and Katsuki glanced at everyone’s faces before he started to write. Their expressions were weird, almost like they were proud of him or something. He must be imagining things.

Dear Deku,

I’m gonna be the best hero! You know that I’ve never let a little work keep me from being the best, so I’m not gonna let this hold me back, ok? I’m

gonna become a better person so I can stand in front of you and apologize for all the stupid shit I put you through. I'm gonna work so fucking hard because I promised you that I was gonna be the best hero and I intend to keep that promise, got it?

If I'm really serious about being better, I should probably get rid of that stupid nickname, shouldn't I? I'm gonna be the best hero….Izuku.

See you as soon as I can,

Kacchan

Return

Chapter Summary

Izuku fights a familiar quirk.

Chapter Notes

Yay! Fanart!
Akari x
Paranoid Pug
Soltosia

Izuku was trying his hardest not to hopelessly fanboy, he really was, but it was *Ingenium!* He was such an amazing hero, especially considering how young he was, and he had an entire *team* of sidekicks working for him! There were dozens! And Izuku had never seen him in this area before...well, he actually had, considering that Ingenium had come to Musutafu for a UA reunion and patrolled the streets to sign autographs, but that didn't really count.

He *was* curious as to why he was here though. Had he moved recently? Maybe there was some increase in villainy recently? Izuku thought he would have noticed if that were the case, but maybe with the whole breaking his arm thing it was possible some things had slipped through the cracks…Izuku shook his head and took off over the rooftops again. He needed to be looking for crimes right now, not geeking out over a hero, even if he *was* really cool.

Maybe he'd have a chance to run into Eraserhead again tonight. He hadn't actually seen him since their talk last week, something that was honestly freaking him out a little bit. Sure, Eraser had been really supportive and everything, but now he *knew.* Talking openly about his suicide plans had seemed really comforting in the moment, but now that Izuku had had a while to worry about it, he was starting to think that he should have just laughed it off and deny the whole thing. Not that his midoriya tears would even let him do that, but he could have at least tried.

What if Eraserhead was avoiding him and that was why Izuku hadn't seen him? But if he was avoiding him, why hadn't he started doing that *before* the whole suicide talk thing? It would havelet him avoid a really awkward conversation, so why didn't he just do that?

Thankfully, a shout from a few streets over knocked Izuku out of his thoughts, but then he immediately felt guilty for being grateful. Someone was in trouble! That wasn't a good thing! He jumped down onto the next roof and peered over right as someone screamed. There was a group of girls that were seemingly coming home from a night on the town and cornering them against the wall was the big\gest villain Izuku had ever seen. He was almost tempted to say that the guy wasn't human, but that would be incredibly rude. What was obvious was that the guy had a mutation quirk, though Izuku couldn't tell exactly what it was from his current angle, just that he was huge, had multiple arms, and his hands didn't actually look like hands.

Alright, so Izuku probably wouldn't be able to handle this guy on his own, so he should get a hero. Rock Lock should be the closest to where he was now, based on his patrol schedule. He needed to get him quickly before…

The villain let out a terrifying roar and slammed his claws into the ground. Wait, maybe they were pincers? Izuku shook his head, either way they were strong enough to completely shatter the concrete, which the villain was now starting to grab and throw at the girls, who only just managed to dodge the largest pieces in time. Even as it was, a few of them had been hit by the rubble and at least one had been knocked out that Izuku could see, which meant that he didn't have time to go get a hero. He needed to engage the villain and distract him long enough that the victims who were still standing could drag the injured ones away.

If this fight didn't kill him, Eraserhead definitely would.

The villain screamed in rage again as he ran out of ammo and started lumbering toward the girls again, and Izuku knew he couldn't wait any longer. He grabbed his slingshot and loaded up a marble, shooting straight for the villain's center of mass. There was a quiet *ting* as it hit its mark, but the villain didn't even seem to notice. He must be wearing some sort of armor, but that couldn't be right because he wasn't even wearing a shirt…which meant his skin must be the armor. This fight just got a whole lot harder.

The girls were screaming and dodging as the villain buried one of his pincers into the wall where one of the girls had been just a second before. The hit made the whole building Izuku was standing on shake, but rather than waiting for the building to stop moving, he just jumped off it, landing harshly in a roll that would definitely leave bruises, but he couldn't afford to worry about that now.

“I’ll distract him.” Izuku made eye contact with one of the girls who was still standing and trying to help one of her friends who was on the ground. “As soon as his attention’s on me, you all need to run!”

Her eyes were wide with fear, but she nodded and Izuku gave her his best shaky smile before he grabbed his pipes and ran toward the villain. Just like with his marble, there was a loud tinging sound the moment the metal came in contact with the hardened shell that acted as the villain’s skin, but his pipes didn’t even leave a dent. The attack did, however, catch the villain’s attention. Izuku gulped as the villain stopped trying to hit the girls and slowly turned to face him.

When he saw the villain’s eyes, Izuku felt like all the oxygen in the street had been burned away by the sheer fire of anger in them. Even Kacchan didn’t get that angry! What had happened to make him this way? It couldn’t have been something the girls did, they were just walking, so what was it?

The villain took a step forward and Izuku realized that it didn’t matter why the villain was so angry, what mattered now was that every once of that anger was now directed toward him. Izuku chucked nervously and reminded himself that this had been the plan. Thankfully, he could see the victims dragging each other down the street.

“Um,” Izuku smiled breathlessly, “I don’t suppose there’s any way we can talk this out?”

The villain roared and Izuku had to roll to the side as one of the villain’s pincers buried itself in the concrete where he’d just been standing. The minute he was on his feet again, Izuku started running in the opposite direction that the girls had gone, shielding his head as chunks of rock and concrete rained down from behind him.

“Hey! Throwing rocks is *my* gimmick!” Izuku yelled desperately. “You can’t steal my thing!”

The only response he got was another roar and a particularly large chunk of rock that almost blew off his hood as it whizzed past and shattered a few yards in front of him, which was when Izuku realized that that particular chunk was actually made of brick, not concrete. He glanced behind him and his eyes widened as he realized that the villain was using his pincers to tear at the streets and buildings as he ran, destroying anything that got in his way. It was like all the anger he was holding had made him go absolutely crazy.

Izuku quickly turned his eyes back forward and pushed himself even

harder, trying to push away the vivid image of *himself* being torn apart by the villain's rage just like the buildings.

"Ok, Eraser," Izuku panted desperately, "I know you're not here right now, but you win! I don't want to die anymore...or at least not like that!"

He had to find a hero, or multiple heroes preferably. He was still closest to Rock Lock's patrol, but the direction he was running was quickly taking him the opposite direction. Who else did that leave? Amplifier's patrol was too populated for this destructive of a villain, there would be too many casualties, and Izuku had no idea where Eraserhead was. Was that it? Was this really the end?

Suddenly, he caught sight of a white Ingenium hoodie on display in a shop window and he almost started sobbing in relief. Ingenium was in town! Instantly, Izuku skidded down a side street and started to head in the direction that he'd last seen the hero. Hopefully he hadn't strayed too far, because Izuku was completely out of options.

The moment that he saw the white flash of Ingenium's hero suit, Izuku shot a marble at him. Ingenium, however, had apparently already been heading his way and simply caught the marble and kept running. Within seconds, he was whizzing past Izuku toward the villain, something that in any other situation, would have had him geeking out about his quirk, but today he was just grateful for the hero's speed.

"Be careful!" Izuku forced out, hands on his knees as he tried to catch his breath. "His skin is some kind of hard shell!"

"Don't worry, kid, that's why I have armor!" Ingenium yelled back. "Get to safety, I can handle this!"

He launched a quirked punch at the villain's stomach and Izuku winced at the loud clang as his metal armor met the villain's shell. The armor, however, held up and Ingenium immediately launched another attack, his engines revving as he hit the villain with punch after punch. Izuku, for his part, hadn't had any time to actually figure out the villain's quirk, since his main concern had been making sure everyone stayed alive, but maybe if he could find the villain's weakness, Ingenium might be able to beat him!

Alright, so the villain was a mutant type with a hard shell-like skin, multiple limbs and pincers. Now that Izuku actually got a decent look at them, they seemed almost exactly like a crab's. He shook his head

as he got a weird sense of deja-vu. Why did this quirk feel so familiar? Had he seen it before…?

Izuku's eyes widened and he cupped his hands around his mouth to yell, "Ingenium! I've fought this guy before! He has a crab mutation quirk. Aim for his joints, it's where his shell is the weakest!"

"Got it!" Ingenium instantly started aiming his punches and kicks at the villain's joints, which made the villain scream in rage again, although this time laced with pain. "What's up with this guy anyway? It's like he's gone completely berserk!"

Izuku was honestly wondering the same thing. He must have escaped after Eraser arrested him, but if that were it, he wouldn't be this strong. Izuku hadn't even recognized the crab villain when he'd first seen him, considering he was now twice as large as he had been during their last fight and ten times as angry. Even trigger wouldn't explain the change because Izuku had seen him on trigger before and it didn't have this much of an effect...

"The villain factory." Izuku whispered. "They made him into a next level villain."

It was so obvious now that he'd realized it. However, it also meant that Ingenium was outmatched and needed backup, since the chase had made Izuku too tired to be of much use in this fight and the effectiveness of his weapons were limited by the villain's shell. However, before Izuku could run to find another hero, someone who seemed to be crouched on the ground shot past him and barreled into the villain's legs, making him lose his balance momentarily.

"Ingenium, you alright?"

"Yeah, this guy just has some anger management issues, nothing too much to handle." Ingenium laughed. "Are the other side-kicks on their way?"

"Teams A & C are incoming." The sidekick straightened, letting Izuku see his hero costume for the first time. It was mostly blue, but with red and yellow accents, almost as if he'd taken his main inspiration from All Might, but changed the pattern around so it wouldn't be too obvious. He had a hood, but unlike Izuku's, his was down. "The other teams remained on the original mission. They sent me ahead in case you needed help sooner."

"Well then," Ingenium sounded like he was smiling under his helmet,

“let’s see if the two of us are fast enough to finish this fight before they get here.”

Watching the two heroes fight was honestly breathtaking and unlike the fights he used to watch from the streets, there wasn’t any barrier of police or media blocking Izuku’s view of the action. Ingenium and his sidekick were obviously extremely used to each other’s fighting styles, because there was zero hesitation in how they moved around each other at breakneck speeds. To Izuku, they just looked like blurs of white and blue as they gradually broke down the villain’s defenses. After a few minutes, the sidekick stopped attacking at close range and started providing cover fire with some kind of projectile...wait, was that air? Was it some kind of support weapon...no, it had to be part of the sidekick’s quirk! But he had a speed quirk, right? So how did that work? Oh, Izuku had so many questions!

Now that he’d gotten a chance to breathe, Izuku figured it was probably time to rejoin the fight. He followed the sidekick’s example and decided to keep his distance and attack using his marbles. Careful not to aim anywhere near Ingenium, Izuku quickly fired a marble, hoping to hit the villain's eye, since they shouldn’t have the same shell as the rest of the villain, assuming that whatever experiments the villain factory had done on him hadn’t changed that.

The marble hit it’s mark and Izuku felt a swell of pride as the crab villain clutched his eye, giving Ingenium and his sidekick an opening to combine their attacks and knock him out. Then the two heroes turned to look straight at Izuku.

He froze and the small smile he’d been wearing melted off his face. Were they going to arrest him? But then he’d have to stop and Eraser would tell his mom about him wanting to kill himself and...could he run? No, they both had speed quirks, there was no way that Izuku could get away fast enough…

He was shocked out of his thoughts by Ingenium taking off his helmet and smiling at him, “You must be Viridian. Shouta told me I might run into you around here.”

Izuku was still tense, wondering if this was some kind of a trick to get him to let his guard down. But why would Ingenium have to trick him…?

The sidekick seemed to pick up on his hesitance because he laughed loudly, “Don’t worry kid, Ingenium’s actually pretty lax when it comes

to vigilantes. Believe me, I know from personal experience."

"Shut up, Crawler." Ingenium griped good-naturedly. "Yeah, kid, don't worry. As long as you're not going around and killing people, we'll be fine."

"O-ok.." Izuku's head was spinning. He was actually talking to Ingenium! And he wasn't even going to try to arrest him! He just hoped he hadn't been too annoying, "Um, are you sure it's ok that I led the villain to you? It's just that there weren't any other heroes nearby and I didn't know what else…"

"You're kidding, right?" Ingenium laughed and held up the marble that Izuku had shot to catch his attention, "Everybody back home is gonna be so jealous that I've got one of these!"

"W-what?"

The sidekick, Crawler apparently, looked at him in shock, "Wait, you mean you don't know?"

Izuku was so confused, "D-don't know what?"

"Your marbles are a collector's item among heroes, kid." Ingenium smiled.

"N-no. That can't be right!" Izuku shook his head frantically, "I just throw them to catch heroes attention, it's not really anything special and…"

He was cut off by Eraserhead swinging down from a building and landing in front of him, "Kid, are you alright? You're not hurt, are you? What happened?"

"Whoa, Eraser, calm down, the kid's fine." Ingenium teased. "You know people might actually think you care about the kid if you keep acting like his dad."

Eraserhead glared at him, "Shut up, Tensei. But seriously, kid, are you alright?"

Izuku nodded, deciding it'd be best to ignore the confusing dad comment, "How did you even know about the fight, Eraserhead?"

Eraser looked at him dryly, "You do realize that people sometimes call the cops about disturbances, right? The villain wasn't exactly being

quiet. ”

“Oh…” Izuku said softly, “Sorry, I didn’t realize. People were probably really annoyed at being woken up, weren’t they?”

“It’s not your fault, kid.” Eraser sighed. “It’s not like you were the one screaming.”

“Speaking of screaming, do you have any idea what made the guy so angry, Viridian?” Ingenium asked. “You said you’d fought him before, so does he always go berserk like that or did something happen to set him off?”

Eraserhead looked between Izuku and the unconscious villain, his unspoken question clear just from his posture. Izuku understood why. The villain had changed so much that Izuku really wouldn’t have realized it was the same guy if he hadn’t recognized his quirk, “It’s the crab villain that threw me against the wall that one time.”

“The one that almost killed you?” Eraserhead asked in shock. He turned back to the villain, “Are you sure?”

Izuku nodded, “I recognized his quirk, but it’s stronger now. I’m pretty sure the villain factory got ahold of him somehow, because trigger alone couldn’t have done this to his body.”

There was a moment of tense silence as the heroes digested Izuku’s discovery before Eraser sighed, “We’ll have to do a blood test to make sure, but Jun Hamasaki went missing from custody, so it tracks.

“So the villain factory has been active here.” Crawler said. “Honestly, I was hoping you guys were wrong. Last time was a nightmare.”

“Oh, is that why you guys are here?” Izuku asked, unable to stop himself. “Are you guys confirming the case?”

“Nah, we’re here on another mission,” Ingenium said, “but Tsukauchi asked us to keep an eye out, since we dealt with the whole instant villain craze in Naruhata a few years ago.”

“Oh…” Izuku felt some guilt bubble up inside him. “I’m sorry I distracted you from your mission.”

Eraser put a hand on his head, “None of that, Viridian. It’s the villain’s fault for attacking and a hero’s job is to protect people, no matter if they were planning to or not, so don’t try to blame yourself for this,

problem child."

Izuku felt tears well up in his eyes and was about to wipe them away when he saw movement down the street. Apparently, Ingenium's back-up had finally arrived, because there were two trucks painted in his colors, but there were also a few other trucks with satellites on them...oh no.

"Ugh, the vultures are here." Eraser complained. "Don't they ever sleep?"

"You're one to talk." Crawler laughed. "Shouldn't you do something about those eyebags?"

"Um…I think I'm just gonna go…" Izuku started backing away slowly, trying to keep the heroes between him and the media. That one article had been bad enough, Izuku didn't know if he'd be able to handle it if he made the news.

"Aww, is the local vigilante camera shy?" Crawler teased.

"Viridian's not like you and Pop Step were, Crawler." Eraser said as Izuku started to run down the nearest alleyway. "He doesn't want to be famous."

"Ah, so *that's why* you like the kid so much." Ingenium said.

Izuku was almost too far away to hear Eraserhead's reply, "No. I like the kid because he's got potential."

Relapse

Chapter Summary

Izuku has a bad day.

Chapter Notes

Fair warning, the beginning of this chapter does get a little dark as we get into Izuku's thought process.

The destruction from Izuku's fight last night was obvious as he walked to the park to meet Kaminari. Various damaged buildings were blocked off with caution tape and orange cones surrounded the various holes that the villain had torn into the ground during his rampage. Even after almost an entire day, anyone could have tracked the path Izuku led the villain just by looking around. It was terrible.

Why hadn't he done something more? There had to have been some way to stop the villain or at least localize the destruction! Izuku had been so busy running for his life that he didn't even think about property damage. It was a good thing that he'd never be a real hero, because a real hero would have been strong enough to prevent this.

It took him longer than it normally would to reach the park, partly because he was rubbernecking at the destruction and partly because he was still sore from basically jumping off a roof to save those girls. He hadn't even been able to prevent them from being injured! Why did the heroes even put up with him? It seemed like their lives would be a lot easier if he'd never become a vigilante to begin with. Maybe he should just get it over with and…

Izuku shook his head in an attempt to knock himself out of his spiral. He couldn't kill himself just yet. He would at least have to say goodbye to Eraser, since he knew he was suicidal and at least pretended that he cared. Maybe he could have Eraser talk to Mom once he was gone. Having a hero come to comfort her would probably soften the blow. He would be able to explain better than Izuku could that it wasn't her fault and that he never wanted to hurt her. He could help her grieve. Was that asking too much?

"Hey! Dude!" Kaminari waved his hand in front of Izuku's face, making him flinch and knocking him from his thoughts. He hadn't even realized he'd already arrived at the park. "You ok? You were

kinda spaced out there."

Izuku felt like he'd eaten a rock. He'd managed to make a friend, only to make them worry about him almost immediately. Kaminari would probably be better off if they'd never met in the first place. He forced a bright smile onto his face and laughed, "Yeah, sorry. I guess I just didn't sleep well last night."

"Mood." Kaminari said with mock seriousness. "So are you still good to train today, or do you want to take a break?"

"No, I'm good!" No matter how awful Izuki felt, he'd promised to teach Kaminari how to fight and he couldn't let him down...which meant that he couldn't die yet. He could probably ask Eraserhead to either teach Kaminari *or* explain things to his mother, but not both. That would be leaving him with a bigger burden than Izuku already was alive, which was the absolute last thing he wanted to do. "Alright, so last time we focused on hitting, right?"

"Yep!" Kaminari's face lit up with excitement. "I feel like I'm starting to get a hang of it. I've been practicing some of the moves on my own too!"

"Perfect." Izuku thought for a moment about what they could work on that wouldn't be too physical. He'd already made Kaminari worry by spacing out, so it would be really bad if they were practicing throws or something and Izuku failed to hide the bruised ribs he'd gotten last night. "Well, I guess the opposite of hitting is dodging, so we can work on that...Only if you want to, that is! If you want to work on something else, that's totally ok too! It's just that dodging's important in a fight and it might be useful if you want to learn, not that you have to…"

"Alright!" Kaminari cut off his rambling with a cheer. "Let's learn to dodge!"

Izuku smiled despite himself, Kaminari's enthusiasm gradually infecting him and chipping away at his depression as they walked through some of the ways that Izuku had learned to avoid attacks as Viridian, "So, um, if the villain's taller than you, then you're going to want to bend down low. The tallest people I've fought tend to underestimate how low they really need to aim to hit me, so, um, you can use that to your advantage. Oh, and there's going to be a second or two after they miss you where they need to recover, but you shouldn't let them. You'll already be down low from dodging their

attack, so you should go for their knees if you can to throw them off balance."

"Their knees?!" Kaminari's eyes were wide and he let out a shocked laugh, "Woah, Midoriya. You fight dirty!"

"Do I?" Izuku hadn't really considered that. He didn't really think of his style as fighting dirty, not that he really had a style to begin with, but if he did, he'd mostly think of it as...well, as staying alive. The heroes he fought with hadn't said anything about it, but maybe it was a bad thing? But then again, it was a big deal since he wasn't a hero...but Kaminari was going to be.

Maybe he should ask Eraser about it and make sure it was ok? Honestly, he would probably say that anything that kept him alive was a good decision, since, logically, a hero needed to be alive to save people. Come to think of it, a lot of his moves were based off Eraserhead and the other heroes he'd observed during his vigilante hours, so teaching Kaminari to fight dirty probably wasn't the end of the world. They could always get him out of the habit once he got to UA.

Izuku realized he'd spaced out again and shrugged, "I guess I kinda do. Sorry about that."

"Nah, it's fine." Kaminari grinned. "You've got this cool kinda street fighter vibe to you, dude."

"I guess that makes sense…" Izuku muttered.

"What did you say?" Kaminari leaned in. "I didn't quite catch that."

"Uh…" Izuku really meant that it made sense that he fought like a street fighter, considering that he'd learned to fight on the streets, but he couldn't just tell Kaminari that. "Well, you have to use whatever you can to win. Yeah, big moves might be flashy and good for the press, but at the end of the day, you're fighting to keep yourself and others alive and safe, so you can't hold yourself back."

"Plus Ultra!" Kaminari cheered.

"Yeah," Izuku chuckled hesitantly, "Go beyond, right? Um, do you want to practice?"

Kaminari nodded and got into a sloppy fighting stance, though it *was* marginally better than it had been their first training session, "So...are

you just gonna attack me, or…?”

Instead of answering, Izuku punched him. Kaminari’s eyes widened and he stumbled backward, but wasn’t able to scramble away fast enough to avoid a hit, and ended up on his butt. “Ow…”

“Sorry.” Izuku reached down to help him up. “I, uh, maybe should have slowed down?”

“Nope.” Kaminari grimaced and rubbed the place Izuku had hit. “I’m good. But, uh, maybe tell me what I did wrong?”

“Oh! Right!” Izuku nodded frantically. “Well, for a hit like that, you’re going to have more luck dodging to the side rather than going straight backward. Let’s try it again, but this time, when you see the attack coming, roll to the side like this.”

Izuku demonstrated a roll that he’d picked up from Eraserhead’s parkour lessons and adapted to be more useful for combat, only remembering he was still injured when he hit the ground. He grimaced, but pushed through the pain and it was less than a second before he was back on his feet with a smile on his face. There wasn’t any reason to worry Kaminari when it was Izuku’s own fault that he was injured.

“Just like that, ok?” Izuku said cheerfully. “Ready?”

Kaminari nodded, “Let’s go!”

Izuku waited a long moment before he attacked again, this time making sure he telegraphed his movements enough that Kaminari knew what he was about to do. There was still a moment of hesitation where he panicked, but he managed to roll just in time that Izuku’s punch only grazed his shoulder. He didn’t put in quite enough momentum to get right back to his feet like Izuku had, but it was a start.

“I did it!” Kaminari sprawled on his back and flailed his legs. “I actually did it, Midoriya! I dodged!”

“You did.” Izuku said proudly. “Now let’s do it again. You’ll get better at it every time.”

They kept sparring until they were both sweaty and tired, then they kept going. As Kaminari got better at dodging, Izuku started to mix up his attacks. Sometimes he hit high, sometimes low, he even threw in a

few kicks! Each time, Kaminari struggled with the new attack, but after a few hits, he would get the hang of it. Izuku had managed to mostly push away his funk from earlier and everything was going really well.

That was, until Kaminari decided to counterattack.

Izuku really should have seen it coming. It was a sloppy attack and if he hadn't been tired from sparring and distracted by his own thoughts, he wouldn't have even had to think about dodging it. As it was, however, he was just concentrating on acting natural despite the soreness in his ribs that was getting worse every time he moved, so when Kaminari ducked one of his punches and dove for him, he didn't have enough time to move out of the way. He tackled Izuku around the waist and they both went tumbling to the hard ground. Between the force of Kaminari's tackle and the force of hitting the ground...Izuku blacked out.

"Dude!" Kaminari's voice sounded distant, and Izuku struggled to drag himself back into awareness. "Are you ok? Did I hurt you? Do I need to take you to the hospital?"

"No," Izuku forced out a chuckle, but winced when it hurt his ribs, "it was just a really good tackle."

The spottyness in his vision finally cleared and Izuku was vaguely aware of Kaminari hovering over him, "Seriously, dude, are you ok? Because you don't look ok."

"I'm fine! I just…" Izuku tried to force his brain to work well enough to come up with some kind of excuse, but was coming up blank. Before he could get his brain to cooperate, Kaminari was reaching for him and pulling at his shirt that had apparently ridden up sometime during their spar. They both reflexively hissed, Izuku out of pain and Kaminari out of shock at the mottled mix of purple and green that was currently his torso. So much for not worrying him.

"Dude…" Kaminari stared at him with wide eyes, "What happened?! Did I do that to you? Why didn't you stop me?!"

The fear of Kaminari blaming himself for Izuku's stupidity was what finally kicked his brain into gear, "No! It wasn't anything you did, I was already like this!"

"What did you do to get *that?!"* Kaminari yelped.

Izuku scrambled for any kind of excuse, “I…fell.”

Kaminari looked at him in disbelief, “Off a roof? Because you don’t get bruises like that from just tripping on the sidewalk.”

“Uh…” Well, it was technically true, but he couldn’t just *say* that.

Apparently he took too long to respond, because Kaminari’s eyes widened, “Wait, I was just saying that as a joke, but you actually fell off a roof didn’t you? Wait, how do you fall off a roof? Uh…uh-oh, uh, you didn’t…jump…did you?”

Abort mission! Izuku was in a blind panic, he couldn't burden Kaminari with the whole wanting to kill himself thing! They were just barely friends and he was so cheerful, Izuku couldn’t drag him down like that! His mind raced as he tried to come up with a plausible explanation and he laughed in relief when he remembered Eraserhead teaching him to climb roofs in the first place.

“Don’t worry, Kaminari!” Izuku smiled brightly. “I was just doing some parkour last night and took a jump I guess I wasn’t quite ready for and fell right into a dumpster. So I guess I did kinda jump, but definitely not in the way you’re thinking! I know parkour is kind of a risky sport,” not nearly as risky as vigilantism, “so injuries are expected sometimes, you know? I just didn’t want you to worry, so I didn’t say anything.”

“Dude, worrying about each other is what friends *do.”* Kaminari scolded. “I could have learned dodging another day…wait, you taught me dodging so there wouldn’t be physical contact. Oh, I’m such an idiot, I’m so sorry!”

“No, it’s not your fault!” Izuku waved his arms frantically, “I just…I didn’t want you to know.”

Kaminari sighed, “I get that, believe me, I do. Why do you think I’m still frying my brain every time I use my quirk? But we’re *friends,* Midoriya. We can trust each other with things like this, ok?”

Izuku hesitated. He’d never told anyone about his injuries before. Not the ones from Kacchan, not the ones from vigilantism. He didn’t even think he *knew* how to be upfront about things like this.

Kaminari leaned forward, not satisfied with his silence, “Ok, Midoriya?”

It hadn't been the end of the world when Mom found out about the bullying, had it? Yeah, it'd been stressful, but…if she'd never found out, Izuku would have never transferred to online school and probably would never have learned to hack. Maybe…maybe having someone to turn to for his… *parkour injuries*… wouldn't be so bad either.

"Ok." Izuku felt the tears pricking at the corners of his eyes. "That's what friends do, right?"

"Yeah!" Kaminari's face split into a sly grin. "So you really fell into a dumpster, huh?"

Kaminari laughed as Izuku hit him on the chest, a small, *genuine* smile on his own face, "Shut up, Kaminari!"

That's what friends are for.

Berserk

Chapter Summary

> Tsukauchi and Eraserhead learn more about what happened to Hamasaki.

Chapter Notes

> I am currently on vacation, which is why my updates have been a few hours later than they are most of the time. I am not dead. Well, actually, I'm dead inside, but I don't think that counts.
> In better news, have some amazing fanart by yumz!

“Are you sure?” Tsukauchi gripped the test results so tightly that the paper wrinkled. “There was absolutely no trigger in his system when he was brought in?”

“We checked three times.” One of the doctors confirmed, adjusting her glasses. “And even if there had been, it would have long since metabolized by now. If he was like the other next-level villains you’ve brought in before, he would have calmed down shortly after he was brought in. Whatever made him like this...it wasn’t just trigger.”

Shouta looked through the glass of the cell at who *used* to be Jun Hamasaki. The doctors were right, he had worked with next-level villains before and, aside from a few unfortunate cosmetic changes, once the trigger was out of their system, they returned to who they had been before, but Hamasaki...it had been days and the uncontrollable rage he’d displayed when he was arrested had only grown worse. It was going to make him extremely difficult to interrogate, which was why they had been waiting for the effects of the drugs to wear off like they always had in the past, but difficult or not, they had to try, if for no other reason than to make sure the monsters who did this to him were brought to justice.

“There’s something else.” The doctor said. “With the police department’s permission, we were able to run a whole slew of tests to try to figure out what those people did to his body.The physical changes are similar to what we’ve seen from the villain factory before, but the brain scans…”

She trailed off and Shouta turned to the team of doctors, gesturing for them to continue. After a moment, one of the other doctors continued

where the first had left off, “The only area in his brain that was functioning at anywhere near a normal level was the amygdala, the area that is responsible for emotions such as fear and anger. It’s no wonder that he tore up the city the way he did, considering that it’s almost as if his brain has been rewired to optimize rage.”

“When I arrived at the scene, Tensei said Hamasaki had gone completely berserk.” Shouta said. “We thought there’d been some sort of trigger, but you think that was biological?”

The head doctor nodded, “Almost definitely. The other areas of his brain have started to atrophy at a much higher rate than we’d normally expect, almost as if his body is attacking itself. Right now, the only conscious thoughts he can even process are those that are boosted by his anger, but from the way his brain is decaying, even those might disappear in the coming weeks.”

“Then there’s no point in waiting any longer.” Tsukauchi said with finality. “If we want to have any chance at getting any information out of him, it’s going to have to be now.”

The doctors looked hesitant and honestly, Shouta felt the same way. Hamasaki may have been restrained and mildly sedated, but they were in uncharted territory when it came to his body and quirk. Whatever the villain factory had done to him, it had made him stronger than he had any right to be, which made him unpredictable, which was more dangerous than ever because of his uncontrollable rage.

But Tsukauchi was right. It would be entirely illogical to wait any longer to interrogate him. He wouldn't get any less angry if they waited, and they might miss their chance if his brain atrophied any further. That didn’t mean it was safe or that Shouta had to like it.

Tsukauchi gestured for the doctors to open the door, and Shouta followed him inside. The moment Hamasaki caught sight of them, he started fighting against his restraints, practically growling as he lunged at them. This was why he didn’t understand why some of his students enjoyed horror movies so much.

Real life was so much scarier.

“Jun Hamasaki, my name is Detective Tsukauci and this is the pro hero Eraserhead.” Tsukauchi said, feigning calmness and hiding the slight tremor in his voice behind a thick layer of professionalism. “We’ve met before. My quirk, Lie Detector, will be active during the

course of his interview."

"Die!"

Well, at least he was still capable of coherent speech, though Shouta wished his first understandable words had been something a little more useful.

"Do you know who did this to you?"

Hamasaki growled, "Kill! Kill everyone!"

Tsukauchi wrote something down, "Did they threaten to kill you?"

"Kill!" Hamasaki lunged at them again. "Kill! Destroy! Everything hurt me! I hurt everything!"

Everything? Why didn't he say *everyone?* If it were Shouta, he would want to hurt everyone who hurt him, but attacking everything went beyond simple revenge, didn't it? He glanced at Tsukauchi, who looked equally confused.

Shouta thought for another moment, watching the way that Hamasaki fought against the restraints. When the next level villains recovered, none of them remembered the experimentations. The leading theory was that it was the trauma, but the next one was that the villain factory had someone with a memory modification quirk. If Hamasaki couldn't remember who it was that hurt him, he might lash out at everything...or they might have conditioned him to turn his anger to other targets.

"Did they tell you to be angry at the world?" Shouta asked. "Did the people you were with make you believe that it was everyone else that hurt you, not them?"

"Everything hurt me!" Hamasaki yelled. "Sensei said so! Sensei don't lie!"

Tsukauchi scribbled something else, "Sensei? That's the one that hurt you? Do you know his name?"

Hamasaki shook, "Sensei help me! Kill you!"

Shouta glared him down, "Who is sensei?"

"Kill!"

Hamasaki lunged again, and Tsukauchi and Shouta had to take a step back as one of his wrist restraints finally snapped under the continuous pressure. He continued struggling, apparently too far gone to think to use his free hand to undo the other bonds, but Shouta didn't want to be around by the time he figured that out.

"Get out of there!" The head doctor slammed the door open and gestured for them as she yelled to her team. "Prep the air filtration system for a tranquilizer."

Shouta and Tsukushi ran from the room and the head doctor locked the door behind him. Shouta looked through the window just in time to see a cloudy gas flood the room. Hamasaki fought even harder, managing to snap another restraint before the tranquilizer took effect. His fighting grew weaker for a few minutes before he finally slumped down on the bed unconscious, prompting everyone outside to breathe a sigh of relief.

"Sensei. Do you think that's the symbol of evil that he mentioned before he disappeared from custody?" Shouta asked.

"I…" Tsukauchi swallowed. "I don't know. But why would he be so loyal to the person who hurt him?"

"The pain of being experimented on combined with whatever memory eraser they're using would have made him extremely suggestable." Shouta said. "They've effectively brainwashed him into being loyal to them."

Tsukauchi gave a frustrated sigh, "Which makes things even more complicated, doesn't it?"

They were interrupted as Tsukauchi's phone rang. He took one look at the caller ID and answered, "Hello, Chief Tsuragamae You're on speaker with me and Eraserhead."

"How are things going with that next level villain that Ingenium apprehended?" The chief asked. "Have you gotten any useful information from him? Woof."

Tsuakuchi and Shouta shared a look. It might have just been a theory, but Viridian had been right when he said that the villain factory might be moving onto the next phase of their experiments, because Hamasaki was definitely not an instant villain.

"Not much." Tsukauchi said finally. "He mentioned a person named

Sensei, but Eraserhead believes he's been brainwashed into being loyal to him. Most of what he said were just threats."

"He's not back to normal? Woof?" Tsuragamae asked. "It's been days, shouldn't the trigger be out of his system by now like it was with the others?"

"That's the problem, he's not like the others." Shouta sighed. "Hamasaki represents the next phase of the villain factory's experimentation. He's not a next level villain and, according to the doctors, he most likely won't be recovering like they did."

There was a long beat of silence on the other end as Tsuragamae processed the new information, "Woof...if he's not a next level villain, then what is he?"

Shouta looked at Tsukauchi. They needed some name for this next evolution, because Shouta wasn't naive enough to think that there wouldn't be others. But what to call them? This next phase was defined by the sheer amount of anger and rage they displayed, so something with that? Like Ingenium had said, Hamasaki had gone completely berserk from the experiments.

"He's something else entirely." Shouta said finally. "He's a Berserker."

Goals

Chapter Summary

Katsuki has to decide what kind of person he wants to be.

Chapter Notes

Here's some amazing fanart from Merp.

Katsuki stared at his paper blankly with the sound of pens scratching on paper around him as a taunting backdrop to his most recent failure. According to Amplifier, for this most recent exercise, he was supposed to be writing a list to describe the kind of person he wanted to be, but he was at a loss.

Nobody else seemed to be having problems with the assignment. As soon as Amplifier had said go, each of the villains had started writing furiously, making Katsuki feel even more ridiculous for sitting here ten minutes later with nothing to show for his work but a few scribbles and a headache.

His entire life, he'd always known who he wanted to be. He was going to be the best and that was all there was to it. There was no point in worrying about being mean, or angry, or anything else because all that mattered was getting to the top, which was what had ended him in this whole mess, so it obviously wasn't good enough. But if he wasn't shooting to be the best, then who *was* he trying to be?

His first thought was that he could be like All Might. De...Izuku had always said he was going to be just like All Might and save people with a smile. Kids all over the place wanted to be like All Might, so it couldn't be a bad goal. The only problem was that while a part of Katsuki wanted that, the bigger part knew it just wasn't realistic. He wasn't the kind of person who could save people with a smile. He was scary, so while his smile might be able to terrify villains, civilians would probably scream and run away.

Which honestly made him more similar to Endeavor, but that didn't seem quite right either. Endeavor wasn't just harsh to his fans, he was downright rude, and probably more violent than he needed to be when taking down villains. In short, he reminded Katsuki way too much of how he'd acted his entire life so far, and staying a bully wasn't an option anymore.

His commitment letter to Izuku felt heavy in his pocket as he made another scribble in the corner of his paper so it wouldn't look like he was just sitting there doing nothing like an idiot. Amplifier said the letters were for them, and Katsuki honestly didn't know how he'd explain the whole thing to Izuku and Auntie Inko, so he'd ended up folding up the letter and putting it in his wallet instead of delivering it.

He wasn't sure if he liked or hated having it with him all the time. It made his wallet feel heavier somehow. It was like the weight of all his actions was always with him as a constant reminder, but at the same time it was like putting the weight in his pocket had taken it out of his heart. Katsuki rolled his eyes as he made another scribble. That sounded too damn sappy, it was like...well, he didn't know how to explain it, but it didn't feel so overwhelming anymore. It was almost like he might actually be able to become better someday.

"Alright, everyone! Good work today!" Amplifier's voice made him jump. "Be sure to remember what you wrote down today during this next week. That dream person you described is your goal from now on and I know that if you work hard, you can get there! See you next week!"

Katsuki crumpled the blank paper in his fist and shoved it in his pocket as he stalked toward the door, "Later, Amplifier."

"Sure thing, Bakugo." Amplifier said cheerfully. "Be good this week!"

Katsuki scoffed out of habit before pushing open the door and rushing to leave the community center before Ogawa and the others could try and talk to him. He really didn't want to deal with them right now, not after his absolute failure during today's exercise.

The universe, however, apparently didn't care what he wanted, "Hey, Bakugo! Wait up!"

Katsuki hunched his shoulders a little more and pretended he hadn't heard Ogawa's peppy voice behind him as he walked a little faster. Unfortunately, he was a still-growing teenager and the extras that had decided to adopt him for some reason were full grown adults with much longer legs, which meant that he didn't get very far before he had to step backwards to avoid running into Maki's giant body as he stepped in front of him.

"Hey, kid, why are you running away?" He gave Katsuki a wide, lopsided grin. "Don't you like it anymore?"

“I never liked you.” Katsuki said, rude out of habit more than anything else.

“Oh, straight through the heart! I don’t think I’ll ever recover!” Akiko placed a hand to her chest dramatically. “But joking aside, that was a pretty cool exercise, wasn’t it?”

“Yeah.” Ogawa agreed. “It was like we were picking our avatar in a video game. A perfect version of ourselves.”

Katsuki scowled, but didn’t respond, which was apparently the wrong course of action, because Akiko leaned into his personal space, her interest piqued, “What did you write, Bakugo?”

Katsuki tried to push past her, but she braced herself against Maki, so he turned around and tried to go the other way, only to be met with Ogawa, “If you’re trying to hide it, then it must be pretty good, huh? Come on, man! Let us see the paper!”

“Fuck off!”

Ogawa laughed, “Nah, don’t think I will. Where is your paper anyway?”

“I saw him stick it in his right pocket before we left.” Maki said helpfully.

Katsuki glared at him, but he simply grinned in return. Katsuki growled, but it wasn’t like he hadn’t physically trained his body as part of his preparation for UA, so he should be able to get around these extras easily. He dodged to the left, causing Akiko to move in an attempt to head him off. As she reached to grab him, Katsuki feigned right before continuing to the left.

He was almost home free when Ogawa grabbed his arm. Katsuki whirled around and twisted his arm, not enough to hurt him, just enough to make him let go, then tried again to make his escape, only for Akiko to block him again. It went on this way for a few minutes as Katsuki dodged and blocked their attempts to grab his empty piece of paper until they were all starting to run out of breath.

“Ogawa!” Akiko panted. “Can’t you use your tentacles to reach in his pocket and grab it?”

Katsuki tensed, preparing himself for a quirked assault when Ogawa shook his head, “No. Without trigger or some sort of other drug, I can

barely stretch them to reach my shoulders without straining something."

"Hah!" Katsuki crouched triumphantly, ready to take off. "I guess I win!"

"Not so fast." He heard Maki's voice behind him and before he could turn around to face the new threat, Maki had firmly pinned both his arms against his sides and lifted him a foot under the ground. He could still get out, probably, if he used his explosions, but...the last person he'd used his quirk against was Izuku.

Akiko smirked and grabbed the crumpled paper from his pocket. Katsuki struggled against Maki's hold as she began to straighten it out, "I thought you guys were trying to be nicer and all that jazz? I hate to break it to you, but this isn't *nice."*

Maki dropped him and Katsuki immediately tried to grab the note back from Akiko, but Ogawa stepped between them to block his path, smiling cheekily, "Sorry, dude, but we're not redeemed yet! *Technically,* we're still villains, and I hate to break it to you, but villains steal."

Katsuki glared at him as Akiko finally finished unwrinkling his paper and did a double take, "Wait, it's blank? Did you hide the real one somewhere else?"

"Shut up, it's none of your business!" Katuski used the opening to snatch the paper back and stuff it back in his pocket as he began stalking away.

"...You don't know who you want to be, do you?"

Katsuki was already glaring at Ogawa as he turned around, expecting to find judgement, mockery, and condescension written all over his face. It was supposed to be a simple exercise, so Katsuki knew he deserved it if Ogawa was looking down on him. Not that he'd admit that out loud, but still, he was expecting to find...something. Instead, his scowl melted as he realized that Ogawa was looking at him with understanding, not contempt.

He scoffed, "Whatever. I've spent my whole life trying to be the best and look where that got me."

Maki nodded calmly, "And now, you feel like you've been cut loose."

Katsuki shrugged. So, they weren't mocking him, but that still didn't make him any less of a failure. He was about to start walking away again, because there was no point just standing around forcing these guys to feel sorry for him, when Ogawa smiled brightly, "Then we'll just have to help you figure it out!"

That more than anything else threw Katsuki for a loop, "...what?!"

"Oh yeah, this is gonna be fun. So…" Akiko drawled, "what do you want to be?"

Katsuki simply leveled a deadpan glare at her, "If I knew that, I wouldn't have left the paper blank, you idiots!"

"Alright! Alright!" She laughed. "I'll give you that one. Hmmm…"

"Maybe what do you want to accomplish?" Maki suggested.

Finally, an easy question, "I want to become a better person so I can apologize to D...to Izuku and actually mean it."

Ogawa nodded, "Ok, that's a start. What does being better look like to you?"

Katsuki glared at him, "If I knew that…"

"Then you wouldn't have left the paper blank." Akiko finished. "So what are you apologizing for in the first place?"

"For making his life miserable." Katsuki looked at the floor. "For hurting him."

"So, being a better person would mean…?" Ogawa trailed off like he was expecting Katsuki to finish the sentence.

"Not hurting people?" It couldn't be that simple, could it? Katsuki had stopped going out of his way to hurt others and he still felt like a heaping pile of garbage, so that couldn't be everything.

"I mean, we should probably go a little deeper than that, because you've got a whole blank page to fill, but it's a start. Write it down." Akiko ordered.

Katsuki rolled his eyes, but made his way to a nearby bench and sat down with the paper on the seat next to him so he'd have someplace hard to write and obediently wrote down *don't hurt people* as the first bullet point, "Ok, what next?"

“Hmm…” Ogawa scratched his head as he thought, his tentacles wriggling aimlessly. “Well you said you wanted to be a hero, right?”

“Gee, thanks for remembering.” Katsuki said dryly.

Ogawa laughed, “Yeah, well, what do heroes do?”

It felt like a trick question, “They stop villains.”

“Yes, they do.” Maki seemed to have picked up on Ogawa’s train of thought. “But why?”

“Because villains are bad people and need to be stopped?” Katsuki thought that should be pretty obvious, but apparently not, because Akiko just scoffed.

“Are you seriously telling me you never learned the first rule of hero work?”

“What are you…” Katsuki’s eyes widened, “Prioritize the rescue.”

Ogawa smiled proudly, “Bingo. So…?”

“I can’t just avoid hurting people.” Katsuki said. “I need to stop other people from hurting them too...”

“Sounds like a good goal to me.” Maki smiled. “Write it down.”

Katsuki was almost tempted to smile as he write down his second bullet point, but then he remembered all the extras that were still getting away with murder at his school. Sure, Katsuki hadn’t actually *participated* in the bullying since Izuku left, but he hadn’t don’t anything to stop it either. That was a lot more intimidating...which led him to his next goal.

“I don’t want to be scared to do the right thing,” he said confidently, “even if that means admitting I was wrong.”

“You’re talking about the bullying, right?” Maki asked. “Admitting to something like that sounds really difficult, especially when you want to be a hero.”

“Yeah.” Katsuki said stiffly. “But the extras at school are gonna talk if I all of a sudden start protecting the nerds.”

“But you want to, right?” Ogawa asked.

“Of course I do!” Katsuki snapped. “But I was the worst bully in my school! Half the other kids probably started picking on the nerds because they were following me around! If I suddenly switch sides like this, they’re gonna call me out on it.”

“If they have a problem with you cleaning up your act, then that’s their problem.” Akiko said sternly. “You don’t owe you old lackies an explanation, just like I don’t owe my ex-boyfriend a call back!”

That made Katsuki laugh and he wrote down *don’t be too big of a coward to own up to mistakes* and *don’t feel obligated to give explanations to extras.* There were probably better ways to phrase all that, but for now, he’d gotten the point across.

Ogawa leaned on the back of the bench so that he was looking at the paper over Katsuki’s shoulder and whistled, “That’s a pretty good list you got there. Have anything else you want to add?”

Katsuki nodded and put the pen down on the paper before hesitating, “On second thought, maybe that one’s not a good idea…”

Akiko raised an eyebrow at him, “What are you thinking?”

He frowned, “I want to actually be worthy of being called a hero, but with all the shit I’ve done...I’m not All Might. I’m angry and cruel, and I don’t think it’s realistic…”

Ogawa cuffed him upside the head, “I’m gonna stop you right there, man. First off, nobody is All Might.”

Akiko nodded, “Sometimes, I’m not convinced that he’s not just some mass delusion we’ve created because, honestly? Nobody is *that* perfect.”

Ogawa laughed, “Yeah, what she said. You don’t have to be All Might to be a good hero, Bakugo. And second off, are you sure this is what you want?”

“What are you talking about?” Katsuki growled. “Of course I’m sure it’s what I want, I just don’t…”

“Then put it on the list!” He ordered. “You don’t have to be everything on the list right now, that’s what this whole redeptiomption group thing is all about.”

“It’s a goal.” Maki added. “You’ll get there.”

Katsuki hesitated for another long moment before Akiko groaned, “You screwball, I swear if you don’t write down your stupid goal right now, I’m gonna steal that pen and write it for you!”

“Don’t tell me what to do.” Katsuki griped, but wrote *Be worthy of being called a hero* at the end of the list before folding up the paper, nicely this time, and sticking it in his wallet alongside his letter to Izuku.

And maybe it was just a trick his mind was playing on him, but as he said goodbye and started walking home, Katuki couldn’t help but notice that he felt a little lighter.

Symphony

Chapter Summary

All for One

Chapter Notes

Whew! Ok, I would like to formally apologize. This is the first time since I started this series that I completely missed an update, never mind multiple in a row, but it's been crazy and I had to prioritize my self care. In the past three weeks I:
1. went on vacation
2. got an internship
3. moved across the country for said internship
4. started my new job
5. made a real friend for the first time in about two years
So, yeah, my update schedule is still going to be up in the air for the next month or so? I need to get used to my new routine and find times to write and post.
Thank you for reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

All for One was a simple man. He considered himself something of an expert on the subject of human nature, since an intimate knowledge of humanity and its weaknesses had served him well when building his current empire and, despite the rumors and legends surrounding his name, he *was* still human. As such, he was still susceptible to the same whims that plagued lesser beings, such as boredom, which was what had led to his current frustration.

He took great satisfaction in creating plans and executing them to perfection. In his opinion, a well constructed plan was like a well conducted symphony: all the instruments played their parts with few, if any, mistakes and followed the lead not only of the visible conductor, but of the invisible composer who sat silently as the orchestra mindlessly followed the directions he had given them so that every note was in its proper place at the proper time, just as the composer had envisioned.

It was perfection.

Many younger people didn’t understand the complexities of

symphonies. They lacked the wisdom and maturity that came with age and quickly grew bored and annoyed, then complained about the length of the production as if there was no reason why they should give their valuable attention to anything for longer than a few seconds. They didn't understand that they couldn't possibly comprehend what *true* boredom was until they had lived over a lifetime.

He may have started with grand ideals all those centuries ago, but the truth was that half the reason he did the things he did at this point was because of that boredom. After a while, things like books and movies started to blend together as the same tropes were watered down and repeated so many times that they had become almost completely unpalatable, so All for One had been left with no choice but to compose his own entertainment with the world as his orchestra.

A perfect symphony took time, which All for One had in over-abundance. The composer had to find just the right instruments and manipulate each musician in just the right way to create a peice that would be entertaining enough to satisfy him, which meant that much of the fun of the composition was playing the long game to create it. The time invested in the plan made it so much more satisfying when the unwitting and unwilling participants carried it out to perfection. It was enough to give him chills.

Which was what made it so annoying when people got in the way of his plans. Yes, he could easily recover from the loss of the doctor's latest experiment, but it still irked him. According to his composition, Hamasaki's part in the symphony was to cause chaos on his test run so All for One and the doctor could see the results of their experiment. He fulfilled that part of his purpose well, but All for One had hoped to recover their experiment before the police could so that it would be a marvelous surprise when he gifted Tomura with the perfect army of super soldiers.

Meddling heroes and vigilantes, however, had been...inconvenient. They were like audience members who, instead of sitting quietly as the composer intended, had taken it upon themselves to start playing kazoos in the middle of the third movement. It took what was *supposed* to be a flawless symphony and gave the entire experience a flavor that was just slightly off. It was grating.

All for One was nothing, however, if not resilient. As annoying as Hamasaki's capture was, it was nowhere *near* enough to ruin his

symphony. He'd have to keep an eye on those troublesome individuals who had led to this mistake, just in case they started playing their kazoos again, but there was no need to crush them just yet. They were inconsequential in the long view of his perfect symphony.

He smiled as he thought of one of the players he had in reserve, waiting patiently under the doctor's careful care. He had never intended to keep young Shirakumo. Cloud was not a particularly powerful quirk or one that All for One had any use for. The original plan had been to capture the UA student with the erasure quirk or, failing that, chalk the whole attack up to a failure and try again later.

But then that student had soundly defeated the villain he'd intended to be unbeatable and All for one had known that the hero Eraserhead was going to be a major player in the future of heroism. It also didn't hurt that his other friend, now known as Present Mic had shown incredible promise when it came to publicity. It reminded All for One of himself and All Might: one working hard in the dark while the other showboated for the public.

Or maybe the dynamic between Eraserhead and Present Mic reminded him of himself and his brother, the original One for All. In that situation, the positions were reversed and All for One was the one that had been in the public eye while his brother had chosen to stay behind the scenes to fight him, sadly limited by his own shyness. Perhaps if he and his brother had been on the same side, they could have enjoyed the same dynamic that Eraserhead and Present Mic enjoyed today. They could have been allies instead of enemies and ruled the world with one controlling the shadows and the other controlling the light, like he'd always wanted.

But there was no point in wishing for a ship that had long since sailed. His brother had continuously betrayed him, even after All for One had gifted him with a quirk, and despite his best efforts, they had ended up as enemies. It was fine, he'd mourned the loss, but the scar was still there, angry, red, and uglier than the ones he'd received from All Might.

So, of course, when he saw the similarities in those two future heroes, he'd known he had to have a little fun with them. It was a simple pleasure, but when he was creating one of his symphonies, All for one took great delight in choosing just the right players with just the right identities to make an impact. Even if those identities never quite came to light, he could enjoy the delicious irony behind the scenes, so instead of leaving young Shirakumo to die under the rubble, he had

warped him to the doctor and used the bribed paramedics that he'd intended to use for Eraserhead to have him declared dead on the scene.

The boy had been quite a bit worse for wear when he'd arrived. He'd had two badly broken legs, crushed ribs, and a punctured lung that had already begun filling with blood. Still, even with all his injuries, even if he'd been left under that rubble for the duration of the fight, he undoubtedly would have survived and might even have had a quicker recovery with the use of Recovery Girl's quirk. He would have made a wonderful hero if All for One hadn't stolen him away.

It was enough to make him smile.

The boy's recovery had, of course, been difficult and was made more so by the boy himself constantly fighting him and trying to escape until All for One had finally grown tired of it and taken his memories. It would have made his betrayal much sweeter if he still remembered his old friends, but forgetting them completely would still be effective and after his memories were gone, he became much more docile. He had still seemed to understand that something was off, but he had stopped trying to escape.

It was just a shame that All for One hadn't had access to a powerful healing quirk at the time. The doctor had done his best, of course, but his speciality was in *changing* people's bodies, not in putting them back to how they were supposed to be. The main problem was his ribs. They had been crushed almost into powder by the rubble so without a healing quirk, even when they'd healed completely, they were still too fragile for Shirakumo to fight the way he used to, which was why All for One wanted to give him multiple quirks.

The other quirks could make him stronger and faster, so that he didn't have to worry about getting hit, and All for One could call the broker to have him fitted with some kind of body armor, just in case. But he still needed to be able to *think,* which was still an elusive result. All for One wanted it to have an impact when Eraserhead and Present Mic realized that their old friend had become a puppet in his hands, so he wasn't willing to waste Shirakumo on experiments that were just as likely to fail.

But, the doctor was making progress, at least, so it shouldn't be too much longer until the newest player in his symphony was ready to take the stage.

Chapter End Notes

So! This story has become way longer than I had intially thought it would be. One of the downsides of writing and publishing serially is that I cannot go back at the end and cut out half the book if I write too much, so I have decided to mentally divide this story into reasonable length ones, just so that I feel less guilty about how long it is. Not that you probably care, because you get more content. But this is one of those semi-arbitary breaking points, so without further ado....

End of Book One

** * Please be aware that you have now read the equivelent of a full-length novel.* **
If you are delaying going to bed or doing your homework, this is a good stopping point. Go ahead, get a snack, and enjoy the rest of the story!

Information

Chapter Summary

Eraser passes on some valuable information about the case.

Chapter Notes

Ok! So! New update schedule!
Viridian should be updating on Thursdays.
Cheat Code, if you read that, should be updating on Tuesdays.
I should be able to keep to that schedual pretty well, and I'll try to give warnings if I'm going to miss updates again. Thanks everyone for your patience!
Also, Check out this fun fanart from anonymous the 2nd!

Izuku stood tensely at the entrance to the alley, a marble at the ready in his slingshot which was pulled taut and trained on the collapsed villain who could potentially get up at any minute. Eraser was at the opposite end of the alley, his capture weapon floating ominously around him as they waited. After a few seconds which felt like a lot longer, Eraser blinked, then sighed in relief when the villain stayed put, the trigger-enhanced quirk that had made the fight already starting to shrink back to it's normal state.

"Good, he's just another junkie." Eraser said. "I was almost afraid he'd be another berserker."

Izuku put his slingshot away as he looked at Eraser in confusion, "Berserker?"

Eraser glanced up at him as he restrained the villain, "Yeah. That's what we've started calling the next phase in the villain factory's experiments. You were right about that, by the way. That villain you helped apprehend the other day, Hamasaki, wasn't a next level villain, he was whatever comes after. A berserker."

"Oh…" Izuku said quietly. He hadn't wanted to be right about that, especially not after seeing the destruction that him being right caused and how miserable the poor villain must be. "So you think there's going to be more of them?"

Eraser sighed, "That's the way the villain factory works. We'll probably see at least a few of these guys, then they'll go dormant for a

few months or even years like last time before moving onto the next phase of their expirament. God only knows what they're actually trying to accomplish with all this."

"Most likely some type of supersolider." Izuku had been thinking about it more and more ever since Hamasaki had been recaptured. With many powerful heroes like All Might out there, most villains' best best was to run and hide like the sludge villain had when it attacked him. If enough people had permanently strengthened quirks, however, they might even be able to give the number one hero a run for his money even without his secret weakness. "I'm assuming that Hamasaki's alterations were permanent?"

Eraser nodded, "That was the main difference, actually. All the next level villains eventually powered down once the trigger was out of their system, but he didn't even have any trigger in him to begin with. The rage didn't fade either, hence berserkers."

"Then they're probably getting closer." Izuku said. "Did you guys ever figure out why he was so angry?"

"The doctors said it was something to do with his brain attacking itself or something." Eraser looked frustrated as he stood. "The rage center was the only part that hadn't been turned into swiss cheese."

"An autoimmune response?" Izuku frowned. "But the experiments didn't trigger that in the next level villains, did they?"

"Nope." Eraser clenched his fists. "Besides the extra mutative aspects they were fine."

"So something new was introduced…" Izuku muttered, then looked up at Eraser, embarrassed. "I mean, obviously, since it was a new experiment, but, um, I mean…"

"It's fine kid." Eraser had tucked his chin into his capture scarf so Izuku couldn't see his expression clearly, but he didn't sound mad, so that was good.

Izuku waited a long moment for Eraser to continue, but he'd apparently said all he wanted to say, so Izuku figured he may as well ask a question that had been bothering him, "So, how did Hamasaki escape custody anyway? I thought he was arrested."

"He didn't escape, he was kidnapped right when we were starting to get somewhere with the interrogation." Eraser growled. "It was just so

frustrating to see him again like that, since they expriramented on him in retaliation for talking, but the only clue we got from him was the *symbol of evil,* which doesn't even lead to anything except for legends!" Erasers eyes widened momentarily as he seemed to remember he was talking to a vigilante who was still a child, "Don't look into that!"

Izuku's brain raced with possibilities. He felt like he'd heard that phrase somewhere before, probably on one of the various hero forums he browsed, but it was a pretty ominous moniker, especially with the way it played off *the symbol of peace.* If the person behind the villain factory was trying to be an equal to All Might it would make sense why he was trying to create an army of supersoldiers, so then…

"I mean it, Viridian, don't look into that!" Eraser sighed. "Who am I kidding? You're a suicidal teenager, of course you're going to look into it. I don't even know why I try."

"At least you're trying to protect me." Izuku shrugged. "I don't think anyone else really cared enough to try, except Mom, of course. So...the symbol of evil?"

Eraser glared at him, but Izuku simply gave him a bright smile, not really wanting to dig deeper into all the feelings that Eraser's concern was starting to bring up. It'd be a lot more fun to have something to analyze, even if they were just old legends.

"We're going to talk more about that later" Eraser said sternly.

"Sure thing, Eraser." Only if Izuku couldn't find some way to redirect the conversation next time it came up. "So about the symbol of evil…?"

Eraser glared at him for another moment before giving in, "Fine. From what little I could find, it seems like it was a nickname for some guy who went by the name All for One back at the dawn of quirks. I don't think the legends are accurate though, since according to the stories All for One could give and take other people's quirks."

"If that were true, it would change everything we knew about quirks…" Izuku muttered. "So it can't be true, but maybe they're trying to use a drug to produce that effect? It might explain the autoimmune response. If they were trying to introduce a new quirk then of course the body would attack it, but then why did Hamasaki's quirk just get stronger?"

“Of course you instantly start analyzing, problem child.” Izuku couldn’t see Eraser’s eyes, but he was 98% certain he was rolling them. “Promise me you won’t chase any leads on your own Viridian. That’s what *official* heroes are for, ok kid?”

Izuku nodded frantically, “I would never do that! If this symbol of evil is really behind the villain factory then I’d just mess everything up if I went after him alone!”

Eraser sighed, “Good enough. Now get going kid. And don’t die.”

Shouta watched as the problem child jumped away over the rooftops, his parkour still a little sloppy, but still amazing considering that he’d only been doing it a few months. The kid went at everything with so much dedication, it was just a shame he couldn’t direct that passion toward something that didn’t double as a suicide plan. Why couldn’t he direct it toward become an *actual* hero? Shouta was sure that Nedzu would kill to get his paws on an analysis quirk like Viridian’s. Maybe he could convince the kid to try for UA? They could probably make an exception for the age requirements if Viridian had already entered highschool, and they might be able to get the kid some counciling while they were at it.

He regretted telling the kid about the symbol of evil, but sometimes it was hard to remember that Viridian was a kid playing vigilante instead of an adult hero, especially since he was just as involved in the trigger case now as any of the real heroes were. Once the hint had slipped out, Shouta knew that the kid would attack it like a dog would chew a bone, so at least if he told Viridian the basics, it’d keep him from turning to the dark parts of the internet to find them. It was probably the safest course of action, considering that the problem child was perfectly capable of accessing everywhere on the internet that he wasn’t supposed to if he was able to hack into the heroes’ secure comm system.

Well, at least they’d be able to use Viridian’s expertise on the case. The kid was amazing at analyzing quirks, which would be necessary if there was any truth at all to the All for One legends, not that Shouta expected there would be. Still, if there were going to be more berserkers, Viridian’s ability to analyze their quirks could make the difference between a successful capture and an escape.

And maybe if he stayed alive to help them, eventually Shouta could give him something else to live for.

Theory

Chapter Summary

Izuku, entirely too predictably, gives into his curiosity.

Chapter Notes

We have a lot of amazing fanart today!
I'm not a fish
AAA Battery

Izuku was about to close out of his most recent quirk theory lesson, but then frowned and hesitated before reopening his online textbook. For the past week, he hadn't been able to get what Eraserhead said about the symbol of evil out of his mind. On the one hand, it *should* be impossible for someone to take and give quirks like that, but on the other hand, the one thing that was consistent about quirks was that they were unpredictable. It was part of what made quirk analysis so exciting!

Which was why he couldn't stop thinking about it. If All for One really *did* exist, or even just had existed at some point, it could spark so many new theories about how quirks work or even how they'd begun. Even if his research was ultimately a dead end, Izuku still couldn't resist figuring out if something like that was even *possible.* Even if it didn't help the case, it would make for an interesting afternoon and might even help him learn more about some heroes' quirks. Not to mention that he'd be able to tell Eraser for sure that it wasn't possible, rather than relying only on gut instinct.

So where should he even start? If he tried to search his textbook for *giving quirks* it would probably just kick out a genetics lesson, and if he tried *taking quirks* he'd probably get something on emulator and copy quirks, or maybe a reference to Eraserhead if the textbook was up to date. After probably way too long thinking about it, he finally just decided to search the text for All for One and see if it brought anything up. It probably wouldn't, but it was at least worth a try, and he could cross that bridge when he came to it.

The page loaded almost intently, even though Izuku's anxiety made it feel like it took forever, and when the results finally came up, he stared at the single reference in a daze for almost a full minute before he jerked awake and practically jumped out of his seat in his hurry to

click the link. It was a passing reference in one of the appendices which was why Izuku had never read it before, not that it would have caught his eye if he had without Eraser calling his attention to it.

Transferable quirks, though theoretically possible (Schnider, 2308), are largely considered to be a myth by both the academic community and the world at large, which is why they will not be covered in any great detail here.

The fact that transferable quirks were a myth didn't surprise him at all, that was both his and Eraser's first thought after all. Even the fact that there were enough people that were interested in them to have research papers written on the subject, even though it was unexpected, still didn't come as any surprise. No, what shocked Izuku was that one little line at the beginning.

…though theoretically possible…

He didn't waste any time navigating to the bibliography and tracking down the article. It was a little dated, but it would be a good launching pad for the rest of his research. The article itself was a bit dated and had originally been translated from german, so there were a few uncommon or niche words that Izuku had to look up, but it actually provided a good overview of the theory behind transferable quirks. According to the article, the main basis for the transferable quirk theory was that quirks have unlimited potential. If it was possible to have a quirk that allowed a person to survive in space or to jump higher than skyscrapers, it also had to be possible that a person could have a quirk that could take away another person's ability or even force an ability to manifest.

Izuku rapidly took notes as he read, noting down quotes and citations alongside his own thoughts and theories as his brain raced around in circles trying to disprove what he was reading. If quirks like this existed, why didn't anyone know about them? Were they just super rare? But Izuku knew about some quirks that only one person manifested and yet they still were still talked about and even taught about in schools, so it couldn't be just the rarity. And if these quirks *did* exist, why weren't they helping quirkless people? If they *could* transfer a quirk into someone quirkless, why wouldn't they? Didn't they realize how hard it was for Izuku to be the only kid in school without a superpower? Why couldn't they have given him a quirk?

Izuku forced himself out of his spiral when he realized that he had somehow snapped the pencil he was using in half. He stared at it in

shock for a moment before shaking his head and getting a fresh pencil. That must be a fluke, there was no way he was strong enough to break a pencil just out of stress, even if he *had* been getting more exercise as a vigilante these past few months.

Izuku finished reading the article without any further incidents and was about to turn to the bibliography to find some more sources when he stopped and opened up a search engine instead. Using the bibliography would lead him to older articles than he really wanted, considering that the article itself was almost 50 years old, but if he were to look up reviews of the article, those would most likely cite more recent research as they attempted to either refute or confirm the original article's thesis.

Most of the reviews he found were attempting to basically bash the transferable quirk theory in general, and most of them cited the same three articles that supposedly disproved it. The problem was that when Izuku read those articles...they were biased. It was pretty clear that they were relying more on rhetoric than research and were letting the conventional wisdom of how quirks were supposed to work color their hypothesis. That didn't necessarily mean they were *wrong!* Conventional wisdom was common for a reason, afterall! But in this case...it was just slightly suspicious, considering that there was actually plenty of evidence to the contrary.

One article in particular that caught Izuku's eye was called *The Legend of All for One: A Quantitative Analysis of Transferable Quirks and their effects on the body.*

The article was by an American researcher a few years ago that ran in some of the same circles as David Shield, the support engineer that All Might was friends with when he studied abroad in America, but it had never been translated into Japanese, which Izuku thought was weird considering that eh article itself identified All for One as a Japanese myth specifically. It made him really grateful that his online English class was so fast paced! He still had to have a dictionary open as he read, but he was able to read the article without too much trouble, even more so because most of it was charts that showed the evidence in support of the transferable quirk theory.

Izuku's vigilante alarm went off just as he was about to dive into the charts and it startled him so badly he jumped out of his chair and slammed his notebook shut. Was it already that time? Izuku frowned indecisively for a long moment before canceling the alarm and sitting back down. This research counted as vigilantism, especially since it

was looking more and more like transferable quirks were possible, and Izuku needed to know everything he could about them.

Eraserhead would kill him if he went into a fight unprepared.

Izuku spent the next several hours combing through all the evidence that the article provided. There were several people who lacked the extra toe-joint, but had still manifested as quirkless, while other people had it, but had manifested quirks anyway. Even once he considered that some of those could be explained by quirks with restrictive activation costs, mutation quirks that caused abnormalities in the feet, or even just people downright lying, there were just too many cases for Izuku to ignore.

The most concerning section of the article had been the section on people who had the extra toe joint and should have been quirkless, but had somehow manifested quirks anyway. According to the limited research that had been done, those individuals had, with few exceptions, died remarkably young. Most of them showed signs of impossibly early muscle atrophy, as well as alztimers and dementia. From the brain scans included in the article it looked almost as if the brain was eating itself alive.

It was practically identical to the autoimmune response Eraser had described in the berserker they'd captured. Which meant that somehow, the villain factory was trying to force extra quirks into these people and was trying to compensate for the body's response by forcing mutations. The only problem was that the experiments weren't working. Hamasaki was still going braindead, just like the naturally quirkless people in the article.

As the sun came up and he finally went to bed, Izuku couldn't help but feel grateful he'd never been offered a quirk that wasn't his. It seemed like it would be really hard on his body.

Bully

Chapter Summary

Switching sides.

Chapter Notes

Please enjoy this cute little anxious vigilante boy from Ro.

Katsuki was just stalking out the doors at the end of the school day, his shoulders hunched in a way that screamed *talk to me and you die,* when he heard it.

“Yeah, one of my friends said there’s this kid at his school with a villain quirk." Fingers’ annoying voice echoed behind him as he laughed with some of the other bully extras that still sometimes followed Katsuki around. “He invited me to come along and shake him down. You guys wanna join in?”

Katsuki felt an uncomfortable tangle of anger and guilt bubble up in his chest as the other extras immediately agreed and started talking about how excited they were for some fresh meat and how boring things had been ever since D *eku* had left. How had Katsuki never realized how messed up that was? These guys only felt bad for literally bullying a kid out of school because that meant they couldn't mess with him anymore. The only reason they even missed Izuku at all was because he'd been such an easy target.

Katsuki didn't know what possessed him to follow them. It wasn't like he was going to join in like he would have a few months ago, so why in the world did he find himself keeping an eye on them from a block away so he could take the same turns? Was he just trying to punish himself or something?

He half-expected the boys to notice him. It's not like he was known for stealth or anything. Katsuki’s entire life, he’d been known as the loud kid, be it from his explosive quirk or his explosive temper. He was used to being noticed the moment he walked into a room, but with everything that had been going on these past few months...well, for the first time, Katsuki realized that he’d been fading into the background.

Or maybe that wasn’t the right way to phrase it. Katsuki didn’t think

he was *fading,* per say, not that he didn't deserve to disappear, it was just that he wasn't pushing to be the center of attention anymore. His constant push to be the best had shoved him headfirst into being a bully, so now that he'd decided to leave that behind, he was a little more comfortable being quiet.

It wasn't something he'd ever thought he'd do, but it would probably be a useful skill when he finally became a hero. Being able to trail an actual villain like this might help him stop crimes or something. He followed Fingers and the other extras to a part of town he'd only passed through before. It wasn't the worst part of town, but it wasn't the best part either and his old hag had told him to avoid it if he could. Of course *this* was where these stupid extras would come to bully some kid with a villain's quirk. Could they get anymore cliche?

The group he was following met up with a couple other students wearing another school's uniform and they greeted each other warmly, but Katsuki was too far away to hear what they were saying, not that he cared. The bigger group then walked down a smaller side street until they came up behind a kid with purple hair that was wearing the same uniform as the newcomers.

The group wasn't quiet as they pulled the kid into an alley and Katsuki froze. Yeah, he'd known what was about to happen, he'd participated in stuff like this enough times that he wasn't about to fool himself into thinking that kid was getting out of this without a few bruises, but for some reason it was different watching it rather than being a participant. Even watching the bullying at school wasn't this bad, because he was used to it there for some reason, but this?

This was *wrong.*

There weren't that many other people on the streets, mostly a few adults who simply glanced toward the alley and turned away, ignoring the yells and other suspicious noises like they were used to shit like that happening everyday. Maybe they were, but that still didn't mean it was ok! Why wasn't anyone doing anything?

Being a hero doesn't just mean not hurting people, it also means stopping others from hurting them.

Katsuki moved before he could think. He ran into the alley, warning explosions already sounding in his palms as he turned the corner and saw the familiar scene. The villain-quirk kid had been pushed to the floor and was doing his best to shield himself from most of the

damage by curling into a ball. The only difference between what Katsuki saw in front of him and most of his memories of Izuku over the years was that for some reason Fingers had completely covered this kid's mouth with his hands and they'd always just let Deku scream.

The group froze the moment he entered the alley and Katsuki didn't miss the way the kid's eyes zeroed in on his explosions like he was expecting to be burned. It was too familiar and that made him sick, but that wasn't how things were going to go today, not if Katsuki had anything to say about it.

After a moment, Fingers broke into a wide smile and relaxed slightly, "Oh Bakugo, it's just you! You want in? Kid's got a voice quirk, so you can't hear him scream, which sucks, but hey, not everyone can be as fun to beat up as Deku, right? At least this kid has a hopeless dream of being a hero too, huh?"

Katsuki felt rage flood through him and he felt his hands grow hotter almost subconsciously as he glared at his former lackey, "Get away from him."

Fingers looked confused for a moment before his eyes widened in understanding, "Oh, you wanna beat him up yourself?"

"That's not cool dude." One of his other old followers, the kid with boulders for hair, said. "You gotta learn to share."

Katsuki almost just went along with it. He could pretend that Fingers assumption was right, then let the kid go once the other bullies fucked off, and he wouldn't have to deal with all the drama and gossip that was inevitably going to happen the moment he officially switched sides. It would be so easy.

But that was the coward's way out, and Katsuki was going to be a hero, not a coward, so he widened his stance and kept staring down the bullies, "No. Nobody's gonna touch this goddamned extra, not if I have anything to say about it, so leave him the fuck alone."

There was a long moment of shocked silence before Boulders finally broke it, "You...you're trying to stop us?"

Katsuki's throat tightened and the only answer he could give was continuing to stare them down. Then came the moment he'd been fearing ever since he realized he couldn't be both a hero and a bully.

He saw the image his classmates had of him break.

Almost immediately, Fingers' face twisted into a snear and Katsuki felt a spike of fear as he realized that he was looking down on him. It wasn't like Izuku used to do, just by being nice and offering help, no, he could tell that in that moment, Fingers had truly and completely judged Katsuki as weak.

It took almost everything he had to stand his ground. All he could think about was that he had to do this to be able to stand in front of his friends at the redemption group next week. He had to do this to be able to apologize to Deku. He had to do this to be worthy of being a hero.

"Dude, this is Bakugo!" Boulders whispered to Fingers, not that Katsuki couldn't hear them anyway. "Do you really think you can take him in a fight?"

Katsuki deepened his glare and let the explosions crackle louder in his hands. He didn't really *want* to beat up these kids, they could probably get him in a lot of trouble once word got around that he wasn't going to stand for the bullying anymore, but he would still do what it took to be a hero. He had to.

Thankfully, Fingers simply scoffed and took his hand off the kid's mouth, "Since when are *you* such a killjoy, blasty boy? Whatever, come on, boys, let's leave the *nerds* together."

Katsuki didn't relax his stance, "Just get out of here, extras."

Rage flashed across Fingers' face, but he still let go of the kid and started walking out of the alley, leaving only the now very confused bullies from the other school, who were looking between Katsuki and his classmates incredulously.

"You too, extras." Katsuki growled, accentuating his words with more explosions. "Beat it."

The other bullies jumped into action and ran from the alley, finally leaving him alone with the kid they'd just been beating up. Katsuki watched them catch up to his classmates who had been waiting for them at the entrance to the alley. They started to leave when Fingers stopped and looked back at him with a condescending look on his face, "See you at school tomorrow...Blasty."

Katsuki had plenty to be afraid of. He had no idea how all this was

going to affect his social standing and life at school, this was completely unknown. All he knew was that it was going to be bad.

He didn't let the bullies see that though. Instead he channeled all of his fear into determination, "Bring it on, bitch."

Fingers sneered and turned on his heel, taking his little group of lackeys with his as he left. Katsuki half considered helping the kid behind him up and checking to see if he was alright, but somehow he didn't think that a bully victim would want someone like *him* trying to comfort him.

He only made it a few steps away before he heard a confused voice behind him, "Thanks?"

Katsuki scoffed and looked over his shoulder at the kid, who had stood up and was dusting himself off, somehow looking bored despite what he'd just gone through, "Whatever. Just don't fucking let them do that to you agian."

He looked at Katsuki suspiciously, "Why'd you save me?"

"Why do you think?" Katsuki snapped. "I knew what they were gonna do, and I was sick of being on the wrong side of things, got it?"

The kid looked mildly shocked, "You responded to me."

Katsuki looked at him like he was an idiot, because honestly he probably was, "What, did that beating give you brain damage or something? That's what you're supposed to do when people ask you questions."

"Well, yeah." The kid drawled. "But didn't they tell you about my villain's quirk?"

"I know real villains." Katsuki sneered and looked the kid up and down. "Sorry, dipshit, but you don't make the cut, no matter what your stupid-ass quirk is."

That apparently surprised the kid enough to shut him and Katsuki turned to leave again when the kid called out to him again, "My name is Shinso, by the way."

"Don't care." Katsuki responded, then stopped and looked back at the kid again. "They said you wanna be a hero?"

Shinso nodded.

“That isn’t gonna happen with your scrawny-ass arms.” Katsuki grumbled. “You gotta be able to beat people like me in a fight or you’re not gonna stand a chance.”

He didn’t wait for Shinso’s confusion to wear off before stalking out of the alley. He had to get home and get a good night’s sleep, because tomorrow was gonna be hell.

The Little Things

Chapter Summary

Izuku hangs out with Kaminari

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Dude,” Kaminari panted as he tried to keep up with Izuku’s jogging pace, “Your stamina is unreal!”

Izuku chuckled, “It’s just years of running away from bullies!”

Well, that and six months of running away from villains, even though most of the time, he felt like it had been a lot longer than that. It was if he had always woken up in the middle of the night and gone out to help the heroes. Maybe that was just because he’d spent so long desperately wanting to be a hero himself, but vigilantism just felt...right.

For Izuku, being Viridian almost felt like coming home, like it was something he’d always been meant to do. Not that he’d forgotten why he’d started fighting villains in the first place, it was always in the back of his mind, but somehow, his suicide plans seemed a lot less *urgent* than they had when he first picked up his hoodie and goggles.

“Just go on without me!” Kaminari said dramatically, falling to his knees in the grass on the side of the road and immediately flopping down on his stomach. “Tell all the cute kids at school I’m sorry!”

Izuku giggled uncontrollably as Kaminari put on a show of pretending to die from training-induced exhaustion. Honestly, his friendship was probably another reason for the change in his mood. On his worst days, training Kaminari for UA gave Izuku something to live for and on his best days, it gave him something to look forward to. He hadn’t told Kaminari about his death wish yet. It seemed unfair to burden him with something like that when he had such an amazing future in heroics laid out for him.

The only person that Izuku knew for certain that knew about his suicidality was Eraserhead. He’d been fully expecting the hero to abandon him and leave him to die in peace, but that still hadn’t happened. Instead, Eraser had become a constant. It seemed that they

ran into each other on patrol at least once a week, though a large part of that was probably because Izuku couldn't keep his nose out of the villain factory case instead of Eraserhead trying to check in on him.

It was weird having so much support. Just six months ago, he'd had no one, but now he had Kaminari, Eraserhead and the other heroes, and even his mom, who had been more supportive than he could ever have imagined after she'd found out about the bullying. He really only saw her in the evenings right now, since she worked all day and Izuku went to bed early so he'd be well-rested for his vigilanting, but during those few shorts hours, she always asked about what he was learning in his online classes and let him ramble about quirks, even when she didn't quite understand what he was talking about. It was nice.

"You okay, dude?" Kaminari had turned over onto this back and was weakly kicking Izuku in the ankle, probably so he didn't have to get up. "You spaced out, but didn't start muttering. It was really weird."

Izuku smiled and shrugged, "It's not really anything important."

Kaminari looked at him skeptically and tapped the ground next to him, "Pull up some grass and tell Dr. Kaminari about your troubles."

Izuku laughed, but sat down cross-legged next to Kaminari anyway, "You're a doctor now? And here I thought you were going to be a hero. I hear those double careers can be difficult."

"Did your grumpy uncle tell you that?" Kaminari groaned and sat up. "And no, I'm too dumb to be a doctor. I'll stick with just fighting villains, thank you very much!"

Izuku frowned, "Why do you keep doing that?"

"Doing what? Passing out after training?" Kaminari asked. "It's because I'm a weakling."

"Yeah..." Izuku said distractedly. "Wait, I mean, no! I mean, you *are* weak, but you're getting stronger! And that wasn't what I was trying to ask about anyway. I'm sorry, I'm just putting my foot in my mouth again, I didn't mean to call you weak, I just…"

"Midoriya, slow down, it's alright." Kaminari chuckled. "What did you mean to ask?"

Izuku bit his lip, "Why do you keep calling yourself stupid?"

“Umm...because I am?” Kaminari said it like it was obvious. “I have ADHD, it kinda comes with the territory.”

“But you’re not.” Izuku said. “At least I don’t think so. You’ve picked up on all the stuff I’ve taught you really quickly.”

“That’s probably because it’s physical, not mental, and you’re here showing it to me.” Kaminari shrugged. “I don’t know, the fighting moves and stuff is just fun.”

“Ok...” Izuku had almost thought that Kaminari was just parroting back what other people had told him based on a stereotype, and that didn’t seem fair to his friend, but the whole physical task vs. mental task idea made sense, not that Izuku really knew enough about ADHD to make any judgements. “Are you done for the day?”

Kaminari gave him a sheepish smile, “Yeah? I mean, if that’s ok! I don’t want you to think i’m ungrateful for your training or anything…”

“It’s not a problem!” Izuku waved his hands frantically. “It’s better to pace yourself anyway when you start out so that you don’t get hurt.”

Not that Izuku had done that at all when he’d started training, but he’d also been *trying* to get hurt, so there was that.

“So…do you want to get a milkshake or something?” Kaminari grinned conspiratorially, “We can undo all the hard work we just did running across the city!”

Izuku stared at him with wide eyes before giving a shocked laugh, “Sure! Do you know any good places?”

“What kind of friend would I be if I didn’t?” Kaminari punched him playfully in the arm and started jogging away. “There’s this diner a few blocks from here and there’s this *really* cute waitress that works there. If we’re lucky, she’ll be on shift!”

Izuku followed a few paces behind him, unable to shake a weird sensation of *unrealness.* He’d...never really just hung out socially with anyone since his quirk came in. Yeah, there had been that first day when he’d first asked Kaminari to be his friend, but then he’d started teaching him how to fight pretty soon after that, so they usually trained instead of doing whatever normal teenagers were supposed to do. Not that a secret vigilante and a future pro-hero were necessarily normal teenagers, but whatever.

Izuku liked it better that way, honestly, because he never had to worry about being *enough.* When he was training Kaminari, he didn't have to wonder if he was fun enough to just hang out with or if his friend was just wasting his time hanging out with the useless quirkless kid. Even if Izuku wasn't fun to be around, Kaminari was still gaining useless skills, but with sitting around and just being together...what if he got bored and realized that Izuku wasn't as great and mentally stable as he pretended to be?

He shook his head as Kaminari held open the door to a small diner for him. Kaminari had proven that he enjoyed being around Izuku, even when he was too injured from *parkour practice* to do much physical training. He wasn't going to abandon him just because they were going to get milkshakes rather than learn to punch.

Probably.

The diner was obviously American themed and had checkerboard floors with waitresses on roller skates bringing out the food. A hostess greeted them with an English *hello* and led them to an empty table by the window to look at the menu while they waited for Kaminari's crush to come by.

"I'm honestly floored by how graceful these girls can be on roller skates." Kaminari said. "I'm pretty sure I'd break an ankle if I even looked at those things the wrong way, nevermind trying to serve food in them."

"If you think that's difficult, imagine doing hero work on them." Izuku said.

Kaminari looked at Izuku in disbelief, "There are actually pros who fight on roller skates!?"

Izuku giggled and nodded as Kaminari's eyes grew wider and he shook his head, "No, dude, you've got to be pulling my leg. Like, ok, I know you're like some crazy smart quirk expert, dude, but there is no way that *anyone* could fight villains on roller skates! It's physically impossible!"

"Nope!" Izuku couldn't help relaxing slightly now that he was more in his element and talking about heroes. "My personal favorite is the animated hero Artiste. Her quirk is really interesting! She's incorporated roller skates into her fighting style so she can quickly draw these huge pictures, and then she brings them to life with her quirk! She actually patrols nearby, but because her quirk relies on her

drawings, she's really only active during the day when she had enough light, so I haven't met her yet."

"Wait…" Kaminari looked confused, "why wouldn't you have met her if she goes out during the day? Isn't that when you're out? I mean, it's daytime right now…"

Izuku tried to hide his panic as he thought of some sort of an excuse. He should have known better than to let something like that slip, it was just that he was feeling so comfortable with Kaminari and the only other person he really talked quirks with was Eraserhead, who obviously *only* knew about his vigilantism and nothing else. Maybe he could laugh it off and pretend it had been a stupid joke, "Well, um, you see…"

"Can I get you boys started with anything to drink?"

Izuku turned in relief to see a bored-looking waitress standing at their table with a notepad at the ready, though the eye-patch over her left eye made it slightly more difficult than normal to read her expression . Her name tag said her name was Kohaku and she had thick copper-colored hair that fell just past her shoulders...wait, no, it was slightly reflective, so it might actually be metal. Was that her quirk? What could she…

He realized he'd been staring at her hair for longer than was normally socially acceptable when Kaminari kicked him under the table and shot him a look.

Izuku shook himself in embarrassment and gave the waitress a sheepish smile, "I, uh, I'll just have a water...sorry."

"Alright." She turned to Kaminari and raised one eyebrow. "And you?"

"How about a shot with you?" Kaminari winked.

Izuku had to stifle a grin as he watched Kohaku roll her visible eye, "Nice try. I'll get you a diet coke."

She turned on her heel and walked away as Kaminari groaned and hit his head on the table, "Aww! I thought that was a good one!"

Izuku patted his head consolingly, "Maybe you'll have better luck next time, Kaminari. At least we got seated in her section like you wanted. Unless that's not actually the girl you have a crush on and you just

flirt with all the waitresses."

"Only most of them." Kaminari shrugged. "And I don't have a *crush* on her, I just...think she's cute. And besides, flirting is fun!"

"From what I saw, she's just been shooting you down." Izuku pointed out. "How is that *fun?"*

"Because it's a challenge!" Kaminari laughed and picked up his menu. "And she's actually been a lot more receptive recently. She used to be really brash all the time, but then she had her accident and when she came back, she was *different.* Her personality's a little more bubbly now, I think she decided life was too short to be abrasive."

"Was that when she got her eye patch?" Izuku glanced over toward the kitchen, but couldn't see their waitress. He had to admit he was curious about it, since most people who wore eyepatches did so because of their quirks and he was pretty sure hers had to do with her hair, not her eyes, but he didn't want to annoy her by asking.

Kaminari apparently knew the story, though, because he nodded, "Yeah. From what the other wait staff here has told me, she got knocked down during a villain attack and...I don't know if you noticed anything off about her hair?"

Izuku nodded eagerly, "That's her quirk, isn't it? Her hair is made of metal, most likely copper if the color is any indication of the actual chemical composition, but then again it could be different because of the introduction of human DNA…"

"Of course our local quirk expert already figured it out." Kaminari chuckled. "But yeah, because her hair's basically wire, it can apparently be pretty sharp, so she told everyone that when she got knocked down, it fell in her face and...well, that's when she started wearing the eye patch."

"Oh.." Izuku didn't really know what to say to that. At least Izuku had done something to deserve all the bad stuff that happened to him, being born quirkless and still wanting to be a hero, but Kohaku hadn't done anything to deserve losing her sight like that. That must have been so difficult for her!

"It doesn't make her any less pretty, though!" Kaminari said pretty. "I don't know, it adds like an air of mystery to her or something." He glanced over toward the kitchen and panicked. "Oh shit! Dude, she's coming back! Did you even look at the menu? And what am I

supposed to say to her? Do you have any pickup lines you recommend?"

Izuku hid a grin behind his hand and shook his head, "Sorry, Kaminari. You're on your own."

Kaminari pouted for half a second until Kohaku got back to their table and he brightened. She sighed and gave Izuku an amused look that said something like *do you see what I have to deal with?*

Izuku tried to hold back a smile as she turned back to Kaminari, "Do you know what you want yet?"

"Well, I have a little problem." Kaminari smirked. "I want your number, but I couldn't find it on the menu."

Izuku giggled silently as Kohaku let out a short huff of laughter, "Nice one. Are you done now?"

Kaminari sighed dramatically, "I guess. Unless of course you want me to keep going?"

The waitress rolled her eyes, but Izuku could see a tiny smile too, "Just tell me what food you want."

Kaminari laughed, "I want a grasshopper milkshake."

"And I want a strawberry one, if that's alright." Izuku added.

"Sure thing, boys." Kohaku winked at them with her good eye and turned to leave. "Better luck next time."

"Ugh!" Kaminari groaned, but was still smiling. "I felt like I was really close that time!"

"Not really." Izuku's cheeks were starting to hurt from how much he'd been smiling since they arrived, especially since he hadn't had as much practice holding that expression recently. It was amazing. "I'm sorry, but as your friend, I have to be honest...you need better pick up lines."

Kaminari laughed and took a sip of his coke, "Maybe. But, like, I'm probably going to have to stop being such a flirt if I get into UA, so there's not really much of a point."

Izuku frowned thoughtfully, "Well, not necessarily…"

Kaminari shrugged, “They’re probably going to want me to be *professional,* something I’m going to have a hard enough time with as it is. Being a flirt would just be the last straw and get me kicked out.”

“Not if it was a part of your marketing plan.” Izuku pointed out. “Midnight uses her sex appeal to make her more popular, and even if you didn’t want to go that far, flirting with fans would most likely *add* to your popularity, which would raise you in the rankings and help you be a more effective hero. Not to mention that people tend to get distracted when people flirt with them, so if you were to learn to do it more effectively, it would be a great way to throw villains off balance!”

Kaminari looked slightly shocked as Izuku finished speaking, but he also looked...nervous? Izuku didn’t know what he had to be nervous about. He obviously enjoyed flirting and thought it was fun, which meant that he’d probably be able to be really good at it and, as Eraserhead would say, it was only logical to take advantage of that. So what was he insecure about?

“Um…” Kaminari bit his lip. “I don’t know...it’s just...well, um, let’s just say that I don’t flirt with only the *waitresses…”*

Izuku took a second to process that, “Oh.”

“Yeah.” Kaminari looked like he was waiting for Izuku to judge him and tell him that they couldn’t be friends anymore. Izuku was way too experienced with that expression on his own face.

He hated it.

“I’m not actually sure that would be a disadvantage.” Izuku said seriously. “You’d obviously have to talk to the marketing department once you make it into UA, but like...I mean you’d be able to appeal to a wider audience, right? And stuff like that is becoming a lot more accepted anyway, so I think that if it’s something you think you would enjoy then there’s no reason not to, especially not when it will make you a better hero.”

Kaminari looked at Izuku with wide eyes before he started laughing, “So...you really think I can seduce villains, huh?”

Izuku laughed and rolled his eyes, “Not with your current lines you can’t!”

“Oh?” Kaminari leaned over the table and smirked at him as he

lowered his voice to what was probably *supposed* to be a purr, “Does that mean you’re volunteering to help me?”

Izuku burst out laughing and Kaminari leaned back into his own seat and joined him. They probably would have kept laughing until their milkshakes came if they hadn’t been interrupted by an exclamation from a few tables away.

“Ew!” The woman was looking at her plate in disgust. “There’s a fly in my burger! Wait...oh, gross, it’s a bee! I need to talk to the manager. *Now!”*

The hostess ran up to the table, frantically apologizing to the woman as she waived one of the waiters to go get the manager.

“Huh, have they seriously not found the nest yet?” Kaminari frowned thoughtfully. “That sucks.”

Izuku looked at him in confusion, “This isn’t the first time you’ve seen this happen?”

Kaminari shook his head, “They’ve been having problems with bees hanging around for a few months now, they just haven't been able to find the hive, so they can’t get rid of them. I’d *hate* to be the manager right now.”

Izuku nodded in agreement, but he still couldn’t help glancing at his milkshake when it finally arrived. It was bug-free, thankfully, but this time, their waitress didn’t even give Kaminari a second-glance, much less respond to his flirting. She seemed almost angry about something, but it was probably just the stress of a customer finding a bug in their lunch, so Izuku couldn’t really blame her.

It wasn’t like it was her fault that there were bees in the diner.

Chapter End Notes

> So, something I like to do as a writer is recycle OCs from my other stories as a fun easter egg for my readers, which is what I've done here. The important thing to remember is that **each of my stories is a different universe and they do not affect one another!**
> This means that many things that are happening here **did not and will not happen in my other works.**
> I hope that clarifies any confusion!
> Also, I have been looking for opportunities to bring in elements of

the UA staff AU on Tic Tok and was super excited this chapter when I was able to make it happen. The pro-hero Artiste is an OC created by @mailleur_maker, and the whole AU is a lot of fun, so be sure to check it out if Tic Tok's your thing.

Growth

Chapter Summary

Vigilantes have an obligation to protect people as best they can.

Chapter Notes

Here have some awesome art that I'm totally a BEE made in response to about a million and a half bee puns that took over our discord chat after the last chapter.

Enjoy the lightheartedness while you can.

Izuku almost hadn't gone out tonight. It was New Years, so he'd been planning on staying up with Mom as late as she wanted, then maybe hacking into the hero comms after she went to bed. But then, Mom had had a long day at work, so she ended up going to bed at 12:02, about as early as possible while still being able to brag about staying up until midnight. So, with that plan out the window, as soon as he was sure she was asleep, Izuku had hacked into the city cameras and quickly realized that the holiday made the streets a lot busier than he was used to, which meant that the heroes could probably use some more boots on the ground, so Izuku had rushed to get dressed in his vigilante outfit and run straight out the door and onto the rooftops.

Which was how he had ended up on the roof of one of the many apartment buildings with a direct view of the bar district where Amplifier patrolled. A few fights had broken out that either resolved themselves quickly or that Amplifier made it to before he could get down to the street, so Izuku had spent most of his night looking for girls who were just a *little* too drunk to be willingly going home with a guy and shooting his marbles at the sketchy dudes trying to force them into either alleyways or cars. It was actually a lot more fun than he'd expected it to be and almost always bought more than enough time for the girl's friends to usher her away while the guy was busy storming around looking for whatever punk had just shot him in the leg with a marble.

He felt a little bad for laughing whenever, but at one point, Amplifier had caught sight of what he was doing and he'd seen her holding back laughter of her own and wink at him, so he supposed he wasn't doing anything *too* terrible, right? Whenever he wasn't annoying the crime out of frat boys, he ended up trying to eavesdrop on the people who

seemed to be having good luck seducing people the *right* way. What could he say? He didn't know anything about flirting and he needed inspiration to help Kaminari become a better hero and add the weapon of seduction to his arsenal!

Izuku giggled as the most recent guy he was watching got definitively shot down by his target's best friend. The guy just laughed off the disappointment with his buddies before going to find someone else to flirt with. It seemed like, as busy and risky as the night was, everyone was having fun and there wouldn't be any major issues to ruin the party.

Until everyone started screaming.

Izuku whipped around to see a small crowd of people running toward him, some tripping desperately to get away from the stretching vines that were reaching for their ankles as a large, mutated villain loomed behind them. Izuku's brain immediately started racing as he analyzed what he could see of the villain's quirk in the darkness. It seemed to be somewhat similar to Kamui Woods' quirk, so there were probably weaknesses to things like heat, fire, and prolonged exposure to darkness, none of which Izuku was necessarily prepared to take advantage of right now. His top priority needed to be evacuation and letting Amplifier know about the villain.

Izuku jumped down onto the street and ran toward one of the civilians who was currently being dragged backward across the concrete by one of the vines. They were desperately trying to grab onto anything to stop themselves, but the villain was moving too quickly for that to do any good. His marbles probably wouldn't do any good here, not unless he could get close enough to the villain's main body to target his eyes, and his pipes were a bludgeoning weapon, which weren't going to be the most effective against wood, which could easily take the blows. Izuku didn't stop to second guess himself as he grabbed the utility knife from his belt. He didn't let himself use it that often because it just seemed way more harmful than his other weapons, but he was a vigilante! He had to do whatever it took to protect people!

He put on a final burst of speed and managed to grab the civilian's hand. The villain didn't stop pulling, but Izuku dug in his feet, grabbed the vine, and started hacking through it with his knife. The civilian started running away as soon as they were free and Izuku hissed as the vine snapped up and hit him in the face before trying to wrap around his neck. He quickly dropped and rolled away, hiding behind a car as the vine uprooted an entire mailbox and threw it

across the street. Izuku felt a warm liquid on his cheek and reached to wipe it away in confusion, since he didn't think he'd started crying, then grimaced as he looked at the dark blood on his fingers. Of course the vines had to have thorns.

Happy New Year!

Izuku was surprised that Amplifier hadn't shown up yet, since the villain wasn't exactly being quiet and the civilians were definitely screaming, and then he was even more apprised when he realized that some of the civilians were starting to run back *towards* him and the villain. He quickly climbed up the nearest fire escape to get a better viewpoint and looked around.

A rose quirk. It was the only thing that made any sense. The villain had taken an entire block hostage and had used his quirk to grow a massive wall of thorns, vines and flowers to trap all the civilians inside. The wall wasn't taller than the surrounding buildings, so it wasn't like the heroes would be able to see it from a distance unless they happened to look down the correct street and notice something odd. The thick layer of roses was probably enough to muffle the screams too, so from outside the attack, it most likely just sounded like another rowdy party. The villain was trying to maximize damage while minimizing risk of hero interference.

Izuku's eyes scanned the street quickly as he evaluated his options. He had two things to worry about: getting the civilians out and getting the heroes in, so how could he…? Maybe he could use one of the buildings as a tunnel? Izuku grimaced as he realized that wouldn't work. While some of the doors on the inside of the vine wall weren't covered, the vines were growing quickly and were starting to cover entire buildings. If the villain was trying to minimize hero interference, he'd probably covered all the external exits before the attack even began.

Which meant that the only thing he could do was contact the heroes for help, then do his best to take down the villain while they got there. He was trapped like everyone else, so he couldn't run to get them, so how could he….?

Izuku jumped off the roof right before the vines covered it completely and he had to be careful to jump a ways out from the wall so he didn't catch himself on too many of the thorns on his way down.. He immediately started running, forcing himself to ignore the screams as the people around him tried to escape the villain's almost infinite

attacks. He was nothing but a quirkless weakling, he wouldn't be able to save all them on his own! As much as Izuku absolutely despised turning his back on people in need, he'd be an idiot not to see that their best chance was to get the heroes here as soon as possible, which meant that Izuku had to find a computer.

He cursed under his breath as almost every door he passed was sealed shut by vines. It would take him far too long to cut through them all, so he just needed to find…. *there!* Izuku sprinted toward the first door he saw that only had one or two vines covering it and he sliced through them with his knife as quickly as he could. He ran inside immediately, leaving the door open behind him as an escape route, should he need it.

He raced through a few dark hallways until bursting through the door of a large room with a loud bang that drew the attention of the entire crowd inside. Even the DJ stopped playing the deafening music with a record screech and took off his headphones. Izuku caught his breath and started looking around desperately, "I need a computer! Where can I find one?!"

One of the bouncers came up to him, crossing his arms intimidatingly over his chest, "Kid, I don't know what you think you're doing here, but this is a bar, which mean you have to leave."

Izuku looked at him in confusion before glancing around the room again. No windows. Loud music. They didn't know about the attack. Yet.

"Look, you're all in danger." Izuku said desperately. "I'm Viridian. I'm a vigilante and I need…."

The bouncer laughed rudely, "Yeah, you're a vigilante and I'm the fucking easter bunny. Get out of here, kid, before I force you to leave."

Izuku didn't have time for this. He glared at the bouncer, who obviously had some sort of strength enhancing quirk, but the thing about strength quirks was that, with the obvious exception of All Might, that strength usually came at the expense of some speed. So when the bouncer moved to grab him, Izuku moved faster, ducking below his arm and using one of his pipes to hit the man in the crotch which should give him some extra time to find a computer before he came after him again.

"Computer, computer…" Izuku muttered to himself as the crowd

parted for him in shock. “Maybe at the point of sale?”

He hurried to the bar and, sure enough, there was a computer for the employees to use. It was pretty basic, but there was an internet connection and Izuku knew he could make it work. He had to.

The bouncer had apparently recovered from Izuku’s blow because he was starting to advance again, not that Izuku really had time to worry about that, since hacking the hero comms took a certain amount of concentration, even with as many times as he’d done it. Maybe he should pull out his knife again? He obviously wouldn’t use it on civilians, but it might intimidate them enough to leave him alone. But more likely it would just escalate the situation and get him beaten up before he could get the heroes, which would doom everyone trapped inside the villain’s quirk. Why did everything have to be so complicated?!

To Izuku’s pleasant surprise, some of the patrons actually came to his aid and held the bouncer back so Izuku could hack the hero network in peace.

“Come on, man.” A huge guy with stitched green skin and horns laid a heavy hand on the bouncer’s shoulder. “Let the kid do his thing, we’re all curious about what he’s doing here.”

“Yeah!” A woman with high pigtails popped her bubble gum loudly. “This is great free entertainment, right?”

“You realize this probably only sounds like a good idea because we’re all drunk, right?” Their friend, a young man with tentacles for hair that gave Izuku an odd sense of dejavu, laughed. “But, hey, Akiko’s right, it makes the night more interesting.”

Izuku honestly didn’t care why they left him alone, just so long as he had enough time to contact the heroes, “Almost there...Amplifier?! Can you hear me?”

“Yeah, Viridian, loud and clear.” Amplifier sounded confused and the crowd erupted into whispers. “Hey, I thought you were out on the streets tonight, not virtual. Where are you? Are there other people there with you?”

“I’m at a bar.” Izuku blazed on, even though Amplifier tried to interrupt him. “No, I’m not drinking, don’t worry about that. There’s an attack...wait a minute, let me get the others on the call real quick, we’re going to need everyone we can get.”

Now that he was in the system, it didn't take any time at all to add the other heroes Izuku knew were in the area to the call, "Okay, Eraser? Rock Lock? Death Arms?"

"Viridian?" Eraser sounded concerned. "You never call this many of us, what's going on?"

"Who is Viridian?" Death Arms normally wasn't active this late, he'd just taken an extra shift for new years, so Izuku hadn't ever had to call him before.

Izuku heard a crash in the distance and figured that the villain was probably on his way, "No time to explain, but you need to get here right now! I'm at…" Izuku turned to the bouncer. "What's this place called?"

The bouncer simply glared, so the girl with pigtails answered, "Club Ecstasy."

"Club Ecstasy." Izuku said quickly. "The villain's blocked off the entire block and...oh crap."

The crowd erupted into screams as a tangle of sharp vines emerged from the door, followed quickly by the villain himself. It was the first time that Izuku had actually gotten a clear look at him since the attack began and he felt his blood run cold as he saw the villain's eyes and everything fell into place.

The villain's eyes held nothing but cold, crazed, rage.

"You need to hurry!" Izuku yelled, already grabbing his slingshot and a handful of marbles. "It's a berserker!"

Izuku hadn't even stopped speaking when he let loose a barrage of marbles at the berkerser's face. The villain screamed in rage and Izuku ran forward with his pipes, ducking beneath the vines as best as he could and body slamming into the villain full force, knocking him off balance slightly. The villain reached for Izuku with one of his vines, but the vines seemed to be part of his body, which meant he probably couldn't easily detach them, so Izuku grabbed the vine and wrapped it around his arm before throwing himself to the floor and pulling the villain down with him.

Izuku didn't waste any time climbing on top of the villain and holding him down as best he could, which honestly wasn't very well. He grabbed his knife and tossed it across the floor to the bouncer, "Hurry

and get everyone out of here! Use the entrances on the south, not the north. They'll be blocked by vines, but if you chop through them, there shouldn't be any more in that direction."

The bouncer nodded resolutely and ran away, followed by a large crowd of now panicking civilians. Those who didn't immediately run away pressed themselves against the walls to get as far away from the fight as they could as the villain finally managed to throw Izuku off of him.

To his surprise, the berserker didn't immediately come at him again, nor did he go after the bouncer, which had been Izuku's next concern. Instead, he seemed to be arguing with himself.

"I'm sick of following your stupid orders!" He screamed. "I just want to destroy stuff!"

Izuku took advantage of the villain's distraction to run back to the computer, "Eraser? Are you still there?"

"Yeah, kid." Eraser sounded like he was running. "We're on our way."

"Good." Izuku didn't look away from the villain as he continued his argument with...whoever was strategizing this whole attack. "He's got a rose quirk, so he's going to be weak to both extreme heat and extreme cold if there are any heroes around with those power sets. Also, if you can find anyone to cut through the vines, make as many exits as you can. I already sent someone to try and cut their way out of this building, so hopefully all the civilians will be able to get out while he's focused on fighting me. I'm gonna go distract him!"

"Problem Child!"

Izuku ignored Eraser's panic as he turned his full attention back to the villain. His grumpy uncle could kill him later if he didn't die. Well, at least Kacchan would be happy, right?

"No! You can go fuck yourself for all I care!" The villain plucked something small from his ear and slammed it on the ground before stomping it into pieces with his foot. "Stupid girl with her stupid orders and her stupid bees!" He turned to Izuku with a deranged smile on his face. "I don't know why that bitch was so insistent I come after you, anyway. You're just a pipsqueak. Choking the life out of you won't even be *satisfying."*

Izuku gulped and shifted into a battle stance. He could see the people

along with walls slowly filtering out, which meant that the bouncer had managed to clear an exit. Now Izuku just needed to distract the villain and get him as far away from that path as possible.

“Well, I mean, I’ve been told I can be pretty annoying.” Izuku said with fake confidence. “So maybe you just need to get to know me a little more?”

The villain’s face twisted in rage and he lunged at Izuku, who barely managed to dodge in time. As it was, the berserker rammed into the bar with full force, shattering most of the alcohol bottles displayed behind the counter. Izuku’s original plan was to lead the villain back outside, but apparently word had spread of the cleared exit and people from the street were flooding in to get out the other side, which meant that if Izuku lead the villain out the exit he came in, he’d be putting all the evacuees in danger. His only option right now was to contain the fight as best he could and focus all the berserker's rage on himself so he didn’t notice the civilians evacuating behind them.

Izuku used one of his pipes to intercept another hit at the last second. He twisted the pipe to wrap the vine around it and pulled the villain close to land a kick to his chest. From that point on, Izuku did his best to stay as close to the villain as possible, which made it difficult for the vines to get a good hold on him. Every time that the berserker tried to turn around, Izuku landed another hit to distract him from the civilians who were still streaming past behind them.

Izuku was vaguely aware that he was bleeding by this point, even though he wasn't really in any pain. He probably should be, considering that he was fighting close range with a guy whose every limb was covered in sharp thorns, but Izuku didn’t have time to worry about that right now when there were people in danger. For now, he was doing well at accomplishing his main goal of distraction, but his opponent had the benefit of whatever experiments the villain factory had done on him, so even though Izuku was starting to drag, the villain was acting like the attacks weren’t even affecting him.

“Thank god, the heroes are here! We’re saved!”

Izuku and the berserker both whipped their heads toward the door as they heard the evacuating civilians start cheering. Izuku was curious who was going to get here first, was it Amplifier because she was close? Or maybe she’d focus on getting another entrance open and leading civilians that way? Maybe Eraser...or not.

Endeavor glowered at him coldly and Izuku froze as the sheer hatred in the hero's glare made it hard for him to breath. He'd never been in the presence of a top ten hero before, at least not as Viridian, and Endeavor didn't historically have the *best* opinions on vigilantes, but his fire quirk would be a good match for the berserkers rose quirk, so Izuku couldn't help feeling grateful that he'd arrived.

At least, not until Endeavor started charging up a Prominence Burn attack.

Izuku looked down at the floor in a panic and time seemed to slow down. The entire bar was soaked with alcohol, since their fight had basically broken every single bottle in this place. Even a weak fire-based attack would set the entire building on fire and even if Endeavor didn't care about hurting a vigilante, there were still civilians around.

Izuku held up his arms frantically, "Endeavor! Wait!"

He didn't listen.

Burn

Chapter Summary

Have I made you suffer enough yet?

Chapter Notes

I got so much art!!! I love it all so much!!!
I'm totally a Bee X X
A True Gentlemortal X
And a cosplay from KnightKasket!

Izuku was used to heat. He'd gotten burned by Kacchan's quirk often enough that burns were about as common for him as stubbed toes or scraped knees for other kids . But still, Izuku couldn't ever remember more heat in his life than there was at the moment that Endeavor's attack hit the alcohol on the ground and the entire room practically exploded. Izuku desperately shoved himself away from the berserker and sprinted as hard as he could to get away but even with all his practice outrunning heroes these past few months, he still wasn't fast enough.

He screamed more in fear than pain as the flames finally caught on the alcohol that had soaked into his clothes during the fight. This was what he'd been hoping for, wasn't it? *He was finally going to die.* His mother wouldn't have to deal with having a quirkless kid. Kacchan wouldn't have to deal with Izuku following him around. Eraserhead wouldn't have to worry about him getting too involved in dangerous cases. Kaminari wouldn't have to pretend to be his friend.

This was exactly what he'd been trying to do...right?

The thoughts raced through his head within a fraction of a second, going through every emotion possible until they finally landed on determination. No! He wouldn't let this be the end! Izuku may be nothing but a quirkless weakling, but he still had things to live for! He still had to tell Eraserhead what he'd learned about All for One! He still had to teach Kaminari parkour! He still had to finish his classes so his mom's love and acceptance wouldn't go to waste! He still had to watch Kacchan become the best hero!

Izuku wasn't willing to die yet.

Izuku hadn't been to that many birthday parties in his life. He'd only been four when the kids at school stopped talking to him and he obviously didn't remember anything from the birthdays he'd had as a baby. There was a vague memory, however, from one of Kacchan's parties that Auntie Mistuki had insisted he be invited to when they were six. Uncle Masaru had lit the candles and then Auntie Mistuki had amazed them all by running her fingers *straight through the flames!* She'd laughed when they'd asked if it had something to do with her quirk before explaining that as long as she was fast enough, she wouldn't get burned. Of course, Kacchan had immediately tried it and ended up exploding the whole cake when the flames ignited the nitroglycerin on his palms, but it had been fun while it lasted.

Which meant that it was now a race. Could Izuku put out the flames before they built up enough heat to kill him? He immediately dropped to the ground, covered his face and started rolling to smother the flames. He spread a trail of flames as the alcohol on the ground ignited, but the alcohol burned away quickly, like that time their science teacher had poured hand sanitizer on on the desk and burned it away without even scorching the desk. Soon enough, Izuku had rolled to an area where either less alcohol had been spilled or it had burned away and he managed to put out the flames.

Izuku winced as he got to his feet. He felt like he'd gotten a really bad sunburn, and he'd *definitely* rolled in some of the broken glass, but he'd survived...for now. He still had to get out of the building. The berserker was down for the count from Endeavor's attack, but the remaining civilians, thankfully only a handful, were screaming as the flames burned tables, chairs, and everything else in sight.

Ok, he could deal with his pain later. Right now, he just needed to get the civilians out of here.

"Fire extinguisher..fire extinguisher...maybe in the back?" Izuku searched as best he could, grateful that his goggles were somehow still intact and protecting his eyes from the smoke. As soon as he saw a fire extinguisher hanging on the wall, Izuku ripped it off it's hooks and sprinted toward a section of wall that looked particularly fire damaged.

"If there isn't an available exit..." Izuku grunted as he adjusted his grip and staggered slightly under the weight, "then I'll just have to make my own!"

He swung the fire extinguisher as hard as he could and the wall

crumbled into ash as he crashed into it. Izuku continued bludgeoning the wall as hard as he could until the hole was hopefully large enough for people to crawl through. Praying to every deity he knew that fire extinguishers didn't work *too* much differently than the movies, Izuku took a few steps back and pulled the pin and started spraying the base of the remaining flames around the exit he'd just made. There was a little kickback as the foam started shooting out, but Izuku held his ground and kept working until he'd cleared a path outside.

"Come on! This way!" Izuku threw the fire extinguisher to the side as he ran to the nearest group of civilians and grabbed a woman who seemed to be having more trouble than most with the heat, probably because she had some type of quirk that made her look like a frog, just like the man she was with. How did that affect diet...wait! No! Bad Izuku! Fire now, cool quirks later!

He dragged the woman along with him until they got out into the cool air and he handed her off to her date so he could run back inside to help the last of the civilians out, only to stop in his tracks when he saw Endeavor and Amplifier leaving the building with a final group of stragglers.

Amplifier used her quirk to yell to the paramedics and firefighters who were just arriving. "Evacuate the area, the building's about to come down!"

Izuku considered running back inside anyway, but then he jumped a foot in the air as a loud crash echoed over the street and the roof of the bar collapsed under its own weight, making him *extremely* grateful that he'd gotten out of there when he had. Wait, what if there were still people inside?!

He forced himself to take a deep breath in a poor attempt to stop the guilt and self doubt that was rapidly trying to choke him. He'd gotten the heroes and done all he could, so now he could only hope that it had been enough and take care of his own injuries.

"What were you thinking?!" Amplifier yelled at Endeavor, though she was apparently trying to keep her quirk from carrying her voice because there were still civilians around, in addition to the reporters and other media personnel that were just starting to arrive. "That attack was too risky! Were you trying to kill Viridian too?!"

The expression of contempt on Endeavor's face made Izuku freeze in terror. Unlike most of the heroes that Izuku had come across,

Endeavor would probably treat him the same as he would a villain and considering that Izuku couldn't see the berserker anywhere...well, Izuku didn't want to think about what could have happened right now.

"Why should I care what happens to an attention-seeking hooligan like that? From my perspective, I saw two villains fighting and I took care of it, just like I was *supposed* to do as a hero." Endeavor huffed and glared cooly down his nose at Amplifier. "It's not my fault that you can't be bothered to do your job and instead let vigilantes run around unchecked."

Ok, so he was definitely *not* letting Endeavor see him again tonight. The heroes knew how to do rescue operations better than he did anyway, and Eraser and some of the others should be on their way, so he'd just have to trust them to save everyone they could.

Decision made, Izuku hissed in pain and ducked into an alley to take stock of all the damage he'd taken as the adrenaline gradually started to ebb away. His jeans were more ripped than they had been at the beginning of the night and were singed slightly in some places, but they were probably still salvageable. Same with his tool belt. He'd lost his pipes, and he'd obviously given away his knife, so all he had left was a handful of marbles and his slingshot. So...he'd have to replace most of that, hopefully at a time that Kaminari *wasn't* working so he didn't have to avoid the awkward questions about what he was building with all this stuff.

His hoodie was practically totalled, though. It was made of a different material than his jeans were, and obviously hadn't handled the heat nearly as well. Parts of it had melted or burned away completely and the parts that were still hanging on had been completely torn to ribbons by the thorns and glass. Izuku winced as he took it off and threw it in a nearby dumpster. Right now, it'd just call more attention to him than he really wanted, and it wasn't like his DNA was in any law enforcement databases, so even in the unlikely event somebody found what was left of his hoodie, they still wouldn't be able to use it to find him. Plus, he already felt like he was burning up, so he didn't really need an extra layer to keep him warm.

Now onto his body. Izuku grimaced as he looked at his arms. He looked...well, like he'd lost a battle with a rose bush. There were dozens of scratches and bruises layered underneath the burns and just from craning his neck to see as much of himself as he could, Izuku could tell that his chest, back, and legs were in a similar state. There

were also pieces of broken glass that had dug into his skin, which obviously wasn't *great.* Overall, Izuku knew he'd probably had worse injuries at some point, but he was having a hard time remembering when.

This was...well, it was pretty bad. For about half a second, Izuku considered just hiding his tool belt somewhere and pretending to be a civilian so he could go to the paramedics and say he was another victim of the attack, but he threw that idea out almost immediately. His disguise wasn't that great and there was a chance that Amplifier or one of the other heroes would be able to recognize him immediately, even without his goggles on. They might not say anything, but Izuku didn't want to put anyone in that situation, especially not with Endeavor breathing down their necks. And even if he wasn't worried about his identity, he was obviously underage! He didn't have a single legal reason to be in that bar! And if he went to the paramedics, they'd call his mom and he'd have to explain that he'd left after she went to bed and she'd be so worried and disappointed and...well, he'd just have to come up with another option.

Normally Izuku would just go home and take care of his injuries himself, but if there was as much glass in his back as there was in his arms then it would take forever to remove on his own. It would be a lot better if he had someone to help him, at least with that part, and then he could bandage the cuts up himself. But Izuku was a quirkless loser, he didn't have any friends…

Oh.

He had never actually been to Kaminari's house before. He'd given Izuku the address, because he said that seemed like something that friends should know, but Izuku wasn't about to bother Kaminari by showing up or asking to come over. But the last time that Izuku had shown up to one of their training sessions injured, Kaminari *had* said that he was willing to help him out.

Hopefully that offer still applied at three am.

"That vigilante has to be somewhere around here. Search the area!" Izuku heard Endeavor growl around the corner and he forced himself to push off the wall and start moving. A few voices, probably his sidekicks or daylight heroes that Izuku hadn't met yet, responded affirmatively as Izuku stumbled off into the shadows and down the street.

Thankfully, there was enough chaos on the streets that no one paid much attention to Izuku as he made his way to Kaminari's apartment. Normally he would just run over the rooftops, since it was faster and much less likely to get him spotted, but then again, he normally wouldn't be going over his only friend's house to awkwardly ask him to take glass shards out of his back, so Izuku figured he could give himself a pass this time. Sue him, he was tired and he didn't feel up to taking the risk of falling asleep halfway between two buildings.

He spent the walk hastily coming up with a cover story that would fall under the broad category of *parkour* while still explaining all his different injuries, especially the burns and the glass. Thankfully there weren't any thorns stuck in him that he could see, because that would've just added another unnecessarily complicated layer to his already convoluted lie.

By the time he found the address Kaminari had sent him, the last of his adrenaline had officially worn off, which meant that Izuku was practically ready to pass out from the pain and exhaustion that had hit him like a brick wall. He let out a hiss that doubled as a wry chuckle. At least the pain was keeping him from falling asleep!

Kaminari lived on the third floor of an apartment building, and Izuku considered just knocking on the front door before looking down at himself and grimacing. Yeah...going inside the building wasn't going to go well and Izuku didn't want to risk running into Kaminari's family looking like this if they opened the door instead of him. It shouldn't be that hard to figure out which window was his right? It would be less weird and embarrassing than knocking on the door this late...

Izuku peeked in the first window, which turned out to be a living room, then moved onto the next, practically sighing in relief when he saw Kaminari lying on the bed reading a book by the light of the electricity arcing between his fingers. Izuku hid his tool belt and goggles under the windowsill and knocked softly, hoping beyond hope that his cover story was good enough and that Kaminari didn't just turn him away.

The minute that Kaminari heard the knock, he yelped and dropped the book on his face. To his credit, he recovered pretty quickly, rubbing his nose as he looked frantically around the room for whatever made the noise.

"Come on, Kaminari." Izuku muttered as he knocked on the window

again. "Let me in!"

Kaminari turned to the window in shock and swallowed nervously before increasing the amount of electricity surrounding his hand, using it to both illuminate the room and defend himself from attacks and Izuku couldn't hold back a small twinge of pride. A few months ago, Kaminari would have immediately surrounded his entire body in electricity, which would have put him close to his limit and at a distinct disadvantage, but now he was instinctively using his quirk that was both functional and defensive, all while keeping away from his limit. He was so smart!

When Kaminari reached the window, it took him about half a second to see Izuku. When he did, he yelped again and fell back onto his butt before scrambling forward to open the window.

"Midoriya?!" He whispered loudly. "What are you doing here?!"

"Well, um…" Izuku winced, "you know how you said I could come to you if I ever got injured doing parkour…?"

Kaminari's eyes widened as he took in Izuku's various injuries and the electricity in his hand started buzzing as it reacted to his emotions, "What kind of parkour were you doing?!"

"Well, it's a funny story actually…" Izuku chuckled awkwardly, careful to keep a strained smile on his face, "I really wanted to do a parkour run tonight to see all the fireworks that everyone's setting off for New Years, right? So, um, I did! But, then, um, I guess I didn't look where I was going and I accidently ended up on the same rooftop as one of the fireworks...as it went off."

Kaminari winced sympathetically, "Ouch...is all that blood just from the shrapnel and stuff?"

Izuku went to rub his arm nervously, onto to stop with a nervous laugh as his hand caught on a piece of glass, "Well, about that…"

Kaminari looked at him suspiciously, "Midoriya, what did you do?"

"Well, um, it was a really tall building!" Izuku blurted out. "And I...might have jumped off the building to get away from the fire before finding a good place to land? There was a window! But, um, I guess it was dark and I didn't realize it was still, um, still closed?"

"You broke a window?!" Kaminari whisper-yelled. "With your body?!"

Izuku chuckled nervously, “Um...yes? The building was abandoned, so nobody else got hurt! I, um, I can put the bandages on myself, I just need you to help with the glass. Unless you don’t want to! You don’t have to, and I know I probably shouldn’t have come, but Mom doesn’t know I snuck out, so I can’t really *tell* her and...”

“Shut up Izuku.” Kaminari walked over to the door and turned on the light. “Can I call you Izuku? I feel like we should be on a first name basis if I’m going to be pulling broken glass out of your butt.”

“Uh…” Izuku blushed. He hadn’t had any friends to call him by his first name since Kacchan had started calling him Deku. “Sure! I mean, if you want, you don’t have to, and...”

“Cool.” Kaminari apparently just didn’t care about his nervous rambling because he walked straight out the door. Izuku awkwardly shuffled his weight back and forth as he wondered whether he should just leave. Maybe this was asking too much?

Before Izuku had a chance to come to any kind of decision, Kaminari walked back into the room carrying a tube of burn cream in one hand and some kind of zippered pouch in the other, all while balancing a half-dozen towels under his arm. He closed the door with his foot and turned to Izuku with a smile, “And you can call me Denki, by the way.”

“Oh, um, ok. Sure.” Izuku cleared his throat nervously. Of course Kaminari... *Denki*... had only left to grab first aid supplies. He obviously didn’t keep them in his room like Izuku did, since he wasn’t a vigilante or getting bullied at school. Izuku shoved down the guilt he felt over his stupid anxiety attack and focused on his more reasonable reasons to feel guilty, “I’m sorry! I know I’m asking a lot of you and I normally wouldn’t do this, but…”

“It’s whatever.” Denki cut him off. “Honestly, it’s more interesting than what I was doing anyway. Insomnia’s a bitch.”

Izuku laughed, “Yeah. I wish I couldn’t agree from experience, but considering how late it is...um, mood?”

Denki snorted and started laying out the towels on the floor, “Yeah. Mood. Um, I hope it’s ok we do this on the floor, I don’t want to end up with glass...well, anywhere, if I can help it.”

“Yeah, of course!” Izuku took a towel and laid it out beside one that Kaminari had just set out. “And, uh, the blood too, probably. Sorry. I,

uh, I can wish these, if you don't want your parents asking any weird questions."

Denki shrugged, "Honestly, that'd be great. Not that they'd really be surprised. I think they're just too used to my weirdness, so they just expect me to be...well, illogical, rather than normal, but still…Um, did you want to start with your...well, um, your butt first? That way you can…"

Denki trailed off, and started grabbing things from the first aid kit and setting them out on one of the towels as Izuku watched uncomfortably, "Um, D-denki? Can what?"

"What?" Denki blinked and squinted at him. "Oh, I, uh, I'm sorry, I must have spaced. What was I talking about?"

"Taking the glass out of my, um, backside first?" Izuku said. "You seemed about to give a reason?"

"Oh, right! So that way you can sit or lie down while we do the rest of your body!" Denki blushed and clenched his fist a few times. "Um, I'm, um, *really* sorry about that. It's, uh, it's kinda late and, um, my meds are kinda a morning and afternoon thing, you know, so by this time...um, so if I randomly start rambling or just kinda trail off if I get too focused on a task, um, that's why, I guess. I'm sorry, the meds just make the difference a lot more noticeable, you know? And I know it's really annoying, so I'll try to stop."

"It's fine!" Izuku waved his hands frantically in an attempt to reassure him. "I, uh, I ramble too, so it's, uh, it's not a problem, and like I said, I know I'm asking a lot, especially if it's this late and stuff, and I'm sorry.."

"Nah." Denki smiled sadly and grabbed a pair of tweezers. "It's not your fault my brain doesn't work as well as yours does, right? Oh, uh, that didn't hurt, did it?"

Izuku winced as Denki pulled out another piece of glass, "It all hurts. At this point, the pain is all blending together, so don't worry about it."

Denki nodded and carefully yanked a piece of glass out of the back of Izuku's thigh, "Are, uh, are you sure you wouldn't just rather go to a hospital?"

"No, they'll tell Mom." And the heroes. "If you just do the stuff I can't

reach, I can do the rest when I get home."

Denki rolled his eyes, "Nope. You're already here and you're not leaving until you're officially glass free. No idea how you're gonna hide all this from your mom, though."

Izuku picked a piece of glass from his arm and carefully set it with the others Denki had removed, "That is a problem for tomorrow's Izuku."

Outrage

Chapter Summary

The aftermath of the New Year's attack.

Chapter Notes

Art!
I'm totally a bee
Aki, but make it bee
Can bees wear socks? X

Yes, a bee cult has taken over our discord server. Why do you ask?

Also, it's not art for this fic, but it makes me deliriously happy, so I'm going to share it.
Unbeeleivable made art of me!!!

“He was a literal child!” Shouta subconsciously activated his quirk as he yelled, which only made Endeavor glare harder in return as the flames adorning his hero costume went out. “You launched a lethal attack at a goddamn kid!”

The crime scene was a mess. Vines and thorns were still everywhere, the city had had to call in tree trimmers to even begin freeing the survivors and dozens of rescue heroes had been woken up and called in to help despite the holiday. So far they had already found five casualties from the attack, and those were all people the villain had killed during his initial rampage. It wasn’t even starting on the disaster that was the bar fire.

The flames had long since gone out thanks to the combined efforts of Backdraft and the local firefighters, but the smoldering remains of the building were like a mocking testament to Shouta’s failure. Somewhere under those ashes was a kid. A kid with a whole life ahead of him. A kid who was just barely learning how to *want* to stay alive.

And now he was dead and it was all Shouta’s fault.

He should have insisted on going straight to the bar instead of going with Death Arms to clear another exit for the civilians. He should have

told them not to call Endeavor despite his quirk being a perfect counter. He should have tried harder to get the kid to stop being a vigilante.

And now it was too late. This wasn't like when Viridian had disappeared because he broke his arm as a civilian. The kid wasn't just going to pop up inside the comms one day like he had then. Endeavor had openly admitted to launching a full strength attack at both the berserker and the vigilante, either not thinking or caring about the fact that the fight was happening in a bar! Fuck *doing what he had to,* if the great number two hero had had even an ounce of respect for situational awareness and property damage, he would have found another way!

"Eraser." Amplifier put a strong hand on his shoulder. "Be careful, the media's watching."

"Screw the vultures." Shouta growled, but he blinked and stalked away anyway. A viral video of heroes infighting would do more harm than good, but that didn't mean he wouldn't be going through the formal channels to make sure that Endeavor didn't get off scot free for murdering a kid. Nedzu in particular would probably *love* tearing him apart.

At least the principal's sadism was good for something.

Amplifier walked with him until they were far enough for the media to ignore them, "How are you holding up?"

"How do you think I'm holding up?!" Shouta hissed. "That...he was just...the kid was finally getting better."

"I know." Amplifier said heavily. "I know."

"It's just…" Shouta groaned. "I'm going to have to look this kid's parents in the face and try to explain that I was just trying to keep him alive. Why did I let him…"

"Stop that." Amplifier said sternly. "If you start blaming yourself or insisting that you could have done things differently, it's just gonna keep you paralyzed in the past. Believe me, I've seen it happen often enough in my rehabilitation group."

Shouta sighed, "And it doesn't make the kid any less dead."

"We don't know that." Amplifier said weakly. "They're still sorting

through the rubble! There's still a chance…"

It only took half a glare to silence her. As much as Shouta would like to believe that the kid had survived, it was completely illogical to get his hopes up. Even if Endeavor's initial attack hadn't managed to fry him, the building had collapsed within minutes. It was only luck that Amplifier had managed to find a small portion of the wall that had collapsed, or else they'd be digging her out as well. Endeavor, the assole, would have of course survived based solely on his inborn fire-resistance. No wonder he didn't care about bringing down buildings! If it didn't affect him, he couldn't be bothered.

"Eraser! Amplifier!"

Both heroes turned sharply toward the shout and were surprised to see Rock Lock, of all heroes, running toward them. He was normally more composed than that, and Shouta was about to say something about it when he caught sight of the ragged piece of fabric in his hand.

Amplifier gasped, "Is that…?"

"Viridian's hoodie..." Shouta breathed. "Where…? Was the kid…?"

"One of Ingenium's sidekicks found it in a dumpster a street or two over." Rock Lock grinned. "That stupid, reckless kid made it out of the building!"

Shouta felt himself practically melt with relief and instantly wanted nothing more than to find a quiet corner and curl up with his sleeping bag and never come out. Why did problem children have to be so emotionally exhausting? He silently swore he'd ground Viridian or something, just to get back at him for all the grey hairs he'd caused. Too bad he couldn't just threaten to expel him, but oh well, he'd find a way to work around it. No good hero was a one trick pony.

"What about Viridian?" Amplifier asked. "Was he anywhere around?"

"If the kid were smart," Shouta responded, "he'd get as far away from Endeavor as possible. But then again, if the kid had one ounce of self preservation, we wouldn't even be having this conversation."

"Aww, are you mad at the kid because he made you worry about him?" Amplifier poked his arm relentlessly and Shouta had to hit her with a quirk-enhanced glare to get her to stop, "You are such a dad, Eraser!"

“I’m *not* a dad!” Shouta grumbled. “I’m not qualified for that position.”

Rock Lock rolled his eyes, “Yeah, that’s gonna be *my* job.”

“So where’s the problem child now?” Shouta changed the subject.

“No idea.” Rock Lock shrugged, then looked around and waved at another hero, “Yo! Crawler! Slide on over here!”

A blue and red blur sped toward them, expertly dodging all the people between them. Crawler grinned at them when he straighted up, “Hey Eraser! You must be pretty proud of your kid, huh?”

“I’d be prouder if he could avoid getting injured every other day.” Shouta complained. “And he’s not my kid.”

Crawler’s grin just got wider, “You just keep telling yourself that, *Eraserdad.* And you can’t scare me with your expulsion glare, you know, I didn’t go to hero school.”

Shouta sighed and hid his face in his capture weapon, “So, you’re the one that found the hoodie? What makes you so sure the kid’s alive?”

Crawler looked at him strangely, like he was both confused and excited at the same time, “Haven’t you seen the video?”

Amplifier jumped in excitement, “What video?”

Crawler smiled and pulled out his phone, “There are actually a couple going viral right now, Pop would be so jealous, but I think you’ll like this one the best. The one with him hitting a bouncer in the nuts is pretty good too, though.”

“What?!”

Whatever Rock Lock had been about to say was cut off as the video started playing and the three heroes huddled around the small screen to watch.

At first, the video was just of the burning bar, which looked just as frightening as Shouta had expected it to. The person behind the camera was freaking out, audibly wondering if anyone was still inside the building when a second voice spoke up.

“Hey, what’s that over there?”

The camera panned quickly over to focus on a part of the wall that was being blown out...wait, no, knocked down by someone inside. After a few moments, the flames started to go down and Shouta narrowed his eyes. There was a chance that the white and grey mass spewing from the hole was just smoke that was catching the light at a weird angle, but upon closer inspection, it looked more like the foam that came out of a fire extinguisher. There was a long moment on the video where nothing happened and the girl recording was just starting to pan away when a small figure emerged in a bloody and torn hoody, dragging a woman behind him as he led a dozen or so survivors to safety.

“Wait, Viridan made that hole?” Amplifier asked in shock. “We...we just assumed that the wall had collapsed with the heat.”

Shouta couldn’t help rolling his eyes, “Of course the problem child *knocked down a wall* to get everyone out. I don’t know why anyone’s surprised. Kid’s probably freaking out about causing property damage right about now, though.”

“The building came down right after, though?” Crawler pointed out, confused.

Shouta sighed, “Yeah. The kid might just find a way to blame himself for that too. It’s just the way he is.”

They watched as Viridian turned to go back inside, only to catch sight of Endeavor and Amplifier and freeze. Thankfully, they were looking away from him, so the kid, in a rare act of self-preservation, didn’t call attention to himself in any way. The building collapsed and the girl recording spun around to catch that instead. By the time she turned back to where the vigilante had been before, he was long gone.

“He’s still injured.” Shouta grumbled, shoulders slumping with relief and exhaustion. “I don’t suppose any of the paramedics picked up a kid matching his description?”

“You’d have to ask him.” Crawler shrugged. “But the kid did good.”

“Yeah.” Shouta nestled deeper into his capture weapon to hide the small smile on his face. “Yeah, he did.”

“Can’t help but be a little sad though.” Amplifier remarked. “The Green Guide isn’t gonna be our little secret anymore.”

Vigilante Crashes New Years Celebration

The new year came in with a bang this morning in Musutafu as a powerful villain took a city block of partiers hostage with his quirk. Due to various complications surrounding the villain's quirk, the heroes patrolling the area were initially unaware of the attack. Luckily, however, they were not the only defense in the area.

A formerly unknown vigilante by the name of Viridian, also known to heroes and police as "The Green Guide" or sometimes just "The Kid", was caught inside the attack radius and was able to contact the heroes and hold off the villain until they arrived. According to one of the victims, the vigilante's involvement saved a lot of lives, including his own, "Yeah, the villain had grabbed me with those crazy weird vines of his and I thought for sure I was gonna die! If that kid hadn't sliced through the vines and let me escape, I don't know where I'd be. I probably wouldn't be talking to you right now though."

Viridian's attempts to save civilians, however, apparently caught the attention of the villain himself.

"It was pretty freaky." Aito Ogawa, who was attending Club Ecstasy with a group of friends, told reporters of the experience. "At first, it was just funny. This kid in a hoodie comes in claiming to be a vigilante and we're all like...sure. But then he got a bunch of heroes on the phone and we're all like...alright, man, that's pretty cool, you got connections. That was when the villain showed up. Honestly, I thought we were all gonners. It didn't look like a fair fight at all, but Viridian took out his slingshot and held his own. He kept the villain's attention so we could all get out. It was pretty badass."

According to our sources, Viridian, who witnesses initially believed to be newly debuted, has actually been an active vigilante for over six months! His first vigilante name, The Green Guide, was given to him by police for his tendency to lead heroes to crimes that normally wouldn't merit much attention, and he graduated to his current name when he started interfering in fights personally. His quirk is currently unknown, but his main weapons consist of a set of metal pipes, a knife, and a slingshot. The green marbles that he uses as ammo are even rumored to be something of a collector's item among the heroes that have tried to capture him.

Viridian is still at large after this attack, though he almost wasn't so lucky. The number two hero, Endeavor, has come under heavy criticism since this morning's attack due to the excessive force with which he attacked both Viridian and the villain, heedless of the dangers posed by spilled alcohol

and of the civilians who had severely limited options when it came to escaping the villain's attack zone. Casualties from Endeavor's attack are still unknown, but it is suspected that there were still multiple people inside the building when Endeavor's fire caused it to collapse.

According to the statement made by the number two hero's PR team early this morning, the hero was acting on the assumption that both Viridian and the villain posed a clear and present danger to the civilians present but a few vocal critics are already arguing that isn't good enough. In fact, some are going so far to call Endeavor's actions this morning child endangerment.

One of the protesters, who refused to give any name aside from Dabi, told reporters at the scene, "Whatever, I get that nobody knows how old Viridian actually is, but if you watch the videos, it's pretty obvious he's still a teenager. If Mr. Number Two Hero is willing to throw a lethal attack at a child like that, I hate to think what he's capable of doing to his own kids."

It remains to be seen how this attack will affect the number two hero's standing in the rankings, though analysts are predicting a significant drop in public opinion due to widespread outrage at Endeavor's actions.

Endeavor himself was unavailable for comment.

Consequences

Chapter Summary

The morning after.

Chapter Notes

Have I ever told you guys how extatic receivng art makes me?
Yeet Factor
I'm Totally a Bee X
ro_mwa
FujiRielle
Bridget the Bee

Today's Izuku hated yesterday's Izuku.

What kind of idiot thought it was a good idea to go from almost dying to passing out at home with only basic first aid? Maybe he should have just gone to the paramedics last night, secret identity be damned. At least then he wouldn't be freaking out in bed trying to think of some sort of half-decent excuse for the mummy-like bandages all over his body as Mom frantically knocked on the door, worried about why he wasn't up yet .

"I'm coming in…okay Izuku?"

Izuku's eyes widened and he had to settle for hastily pulling his blanket all the way up to his nose as the door swung open. He knew he had some scratches on his face from the fight, but his goggles should have protected most of the upper half of his face, so hopefully Mom would miss the rest of his injuries in the dim light of the room. Maybe.

"Are you feeling ok, baby?" Mom asked quietly. "You're usually up by now. What time did you end up going to bed?"

"Um…" Izuku winced as his voice scratched painfully. Ah, right. Smoke inhalation was a thing. He hadn't even thought about that last night. "Probably later than I should have."

Mom looked at him with loving concern as she hurried to his side and put her hand on his forehead making Izuku wince as she touched his burned skin, "Ah, baby, you're burning up! Why didn't you tell me

you were coming down with something?"

Izuku grabbed the excuse like a lifeline, "I didn't want to worry you.I've been feeling a little off the last couple of days, but I didn't think it was a big deal and would go away if I drank enough water…"

Mom melted, "I already told you, baby, you can tell me things. I know you don't want me to be worried about you, but I'm your mother. That's my job." She frowned. "Work called me in today, but maybe I should call them back and tell them I can't come in. I don't want to leave you alone if you're sick."

"No! Please don't do that!" If Mom was around, it would make it that much more difficult for Izuku to find enough privacy to tend to his *actual* injuries and change the bandages that were probably gross by now. Mom tended to hover when she thought he was sick. "I mean, if work needs you, I don't want you to stay home for my sake, right? Um, did they say why they called you in?"

Mom's face twisted with both sadness and worry, "Apparently there was a huge villain attack last night. One of my coworkers got caught up in it."

A flood of guilt rushed over Izuku, "Oh...um, are they alright?"

Was it the berserker attack he'd been involved in last night? Was Mom's coworker someone he hadn't been good enough to save? Was it his fault they were hurt?

Mom smiled sadly, "They were injured, but they'll be ok. Apparently not everyone was so lucky…"

Izuku swallowed thickly. Not everyone was so lucky…? Had people…? He had done everything he could, but he was just a worthless quirkless kid, so of course it hadn't been enough!

"Are you sure you'll be ok here all alone?" Mom put her hand on his forehead again. "You look like you're about to throw up."

He *felt* like he was about to throw up, but it was his fault that Mom's coworker was injured, so he couldn't ask her to stay home, "I'll be fine. I'm probably just going to take some nyquil and try to sleep it off."

"Ok…" Mom still looked worried, but she tucked his blankets a little tighter around him and stood to leave. "Call me if you need anything,

ok? I don't want you to think you're bothering me at work or anything, *you* take priority, alright Izuku? And I know you're feeling nauseous, but don't forget to eat. Would you like me to get you some toast or something before I go?"

Izuku shook his head, "You should just get going. I don't want you to be late."

Mom rolled her eyes fondly, "Of course you're worried about me when you're sitting in bed with the flu."

She kissed his forehead and left him alone. Izuku waited until he heard the front door close before throwing his blankets off with a sigh of relief. His burns might make it easy to fake a fever, but the extra heat of the covers *really* didn't feel good right now.

He considered getting up and changing his bandages before deciding that could wait until his body stopped feeling like he'd been hit by a truck. He was going to be alone all day anyway, so there wasn't any rush, right?

But that left him in bed...doing nothing...bored.

Maybe Kaminari would be available to test or something? He shouldn't have school today, right? Izuku grabbed his phone, grimacing at the way he had to stretch to get it off his desk, only to be assaulted by a barrage of notifications the moment he unlocked the screen. It seemed like every news site Izuku subscribed to had at least one article published about what was being called *The News Years Nightmare.* Why did people like alliteration so much?

Izuku didn't know if he wanted to even read the headlines. His emotions were a complicated storm of guilt and leftover fear from last night, all made worse by physical pain, so he wasn't sure he was in the mood to read a lot of articles praising Endeavor for his heroic takedown.

Endeavor Under Scrutiny For Child Endangerment in Wake of New Years Nightmare

Izuku did a double take. There weren't even any kids at the attack last night! Had something else happened yesterday that Izuku hadn't heard about? He slowed down and started reading the headlines more carefully, then more frantically the more he read.

Vigilante Viridian: A Secret Hero?

Former Victims Share Stories of Musutafu's Best Kept Secret

What is Viridian's quirk?

Local Vigilante Minimizes Casualties in Nightmare Attack

Viridian Meme Compilation

Never Heard of Viridian? Neither Had We! Read Here About How This Crazy Teen Became One of Musutafu's Most Effective Vigilantes!

Izuku numbly clicked on the article and sat up in bed, rubbing his eyes as he willed the words on the screen to change. They didn't. They were talking about *him!*

It seems like everybody is talking about Viridian in the wake of the New Years Nightmare, but just who is the vigilante that took the world by storm last night? And how long has he been on the streets?

Since several videos went viral of Viridian's actions last night, which some are going so far as to call heroic, hundreds of people have been coming forward to share their stories of being saved by the quick thinking vigilante…

Videos?! Oh no! What if someone recognized him! They'd find out he was quirkless and then they'd make him stop! Well, they would make him stop either way, wouldn't they? But if they found out that he was quirkless, they would be so focused on protecting him that he wouldn't ever be able to help anyone ever again!

Izuku didn't know if it was a good of a bad thing that it was so easy to find the videos from last night. From what he could see, there were about four videos making the rounds, thankfully all low-quality cell phone cameras that were never quite at the right angle to catch any identifiable features and tended to blur slightly when Izuku moved, which was pretty much constantly, considering he'd been fighting at the time.

One video showed him hacking away at some vines to save a civilian, another showed him knocking down the bar wall to create an exit for the remaining civilians, and one, that if Izuku allowed himself to truly *enjoy* any of the videos would have been his favorite, showed him fighting the Berserker and ended with him running toward the camera, wreathed in orange, blue and green flames as the alcohol burned off of him. By far the most popular video, though, which was quickly becoming a meme thanks to people who had *way* too much

creativity, was of him hitting a bouncer in the crotch.

Izuku groaned and fell back into bed. He was way too tired to deal with this right now.

It was a shame that they hadn't been able to recover their most recent berserker alive and an even greater shame that the monster had failed to eject that troublesome kazoo player that kept interrupting his symphony. Oh well, All for One was nothing if not resilient, and the boy was not so much of a nuisance that a master composer couldn't plan around him, so while it would have been convenient to have him out of the way, his meddling wasn't a priority for now.

What was a priority was the next stage in his grand experiment.

Tomura needed an assistant. Someone loyal and powerful. A guard dog that could support him and be his right hand as he took his place and continued All for One's Legacy. He had a grand variety of quirks ready and waiting at his disposal for this assistant, but a mindless drone simply wouldn't do! Tomura needed a monster that would both *do* and *think*.

Which was why the growing number of failed experiments was getting increasingly frustrating. They were still useful, of course, if only as mindless monsters that followed orders perfectly once their programming was complete, which was why All for One hadn't reclaimed their quirks yet. The doctor insisted they could be useful in Tomura's conquest of hero society and had even given those failures a name.

Nomu.

But it wasn't enough. The most recent berserker had been the closest they had come to creating what Tomura truly needed, and the doctor was currently busy examining what was left of him after the flame hero's vicious takeown, not that All for One had high hopes that they would find anything useful. But that was alright, that monster had already given them the key to the perfect experiment.

The rose quirk that the villain possessed had been...troublesome. Something that All for One had noticed during his centuries of stealing quirks was that each power behaved differently based on it's abilities. An air manipulation quirk would feel *light* when All for One stole it, almost like it could blow away at any moment, while a fire quirk had to be carefully watched so it didn't burn out of control. It was an

interesting eccentricity, but one that All for One had always dismissed as unimportant before their most recent experiment.

The rose quirk behaved like vines, which meant that it had a tendency to tangle. After All for One had duplicated it and was attempting to insert it back into the subject's modified body, the different copies of the quirk refused to stay separate. They kept wrapping around one another and knotting together despite his every effort to get them to lie in any sort of organized fashion.

It was almost frustrating enough for All for One to give up on that subject entirely, but he was glad he hadn't. It seemed that when the quirks were wrapped together, the body responded to them as if they were a *singular* quirk. The doctor theorized that as long as the holder's original quirk was still present, they should be able to trick the subject's immune system into thinking there was only one quirk if they weaved everything together sufficiently.

All that was left now was finding the perfect combination of quirks for a dress rehearsal.

(dis)Advantages

Chapter Summary

Has anybody missed Katsuki?

Chapter Notes

Art!
I'm Totally a Bee
KattNrina123
Logar123
And now the memes.
X X X X X X

Katsuki shoved the last of his classmates away from the first year that they had been trying to beat to the ground, “And just stay the fuck away from her already, dumasses.”

Fingers glared at him, but Katsuki just glared back harder until he gave up and turned away, gathering up his lackeys and retreating into a corner of the schoolyard reserved for the *cool kids,* a corner of the yard that Katsuki himself had been conspicuously absent from the past few weeks.

He glanced over at the villains posing as his teachers, unsurprised to find them completely ignoring everything that had just happened. Katsuki had half-expected them to turn on him the second he started standing up to his own past behavior and was worried he’d have to have Amplifier write a letter to UA explaining a bunch of black marks on his record, but apparently they were too spineless for that. If they started reporting him for stopping the abuse, he could easily report them for allowing the abuse in the first place. It was mutually assured destruction.

That didn’t mean they hadn’t tried to maintain the status quo, though. Katsuki didn’t think he’d ever forget being called into the principal’s office the day after he’d defended a kid in another class who could grow his fingernails faster than normal.

“Really, Bakugo, I am sure that the other student appreciated you stepping in, but you really shouldn’t be wasting your time on such trivial pursuits.” The principal had said, a slick smile on his stupid little face. *“Kids play around, I’m sure you understand, having done so plenty yourself, so don’t*

you think you should be focused on preparing for UA? The entrance exam is only a few months away, after all!"

Katsuki had simply given him a look that could kill, all respect gone from his voice as he responded, *"I* am *preparing for UA."*

The *and this is a part of it* went unspoken, but from the fear that crossed the principal's eyes, Katsuki could tell he'd gotten his meaning across. He'd left the office without being dismissed and none of the teachers had called him out on his changed behavior since. They hadn't called attention to him in any positive ways either, but he could deal with that. Their approval wasn't what he was trying for anymore.

That didn't mean that losing his alpha dog status at school didn't hurt, but hey, no pain, no gain. If heroes could keep fighting while injured and that shitty green vigilante could keep fighting while *on fucking fire,* then Katsuki could stop those stupid extras from bullying kids, even if it meant he had to be alone while he did it.

Fuck, was this how Izuku had felt for all those years? It fucking sucked! Whatever, it was just one more thing that he'd have to apologize for when he finally got the balls to talk to the nerd again.

"...starts at 7. Everyone who's anyone is going to be there."

"Keep your voice down! You don't want Blasty showing up, do you?"

Katsuki scoffed and rolled his eyes as he stalked off. As if he hadn't known for days that everyone was planning on going to the new All Might movie without him. What kind of idiots were they? It's like they thought he was deaf or something. Well, some of them...Fingers seemed to be intentionally rubbing it in his face like he'd get extra clout for being an asshole or something.

Whatever, it's not like he wanted to hang out with those extras anyway. It was just that the old hag had been starting to look at him weird when he came home so early, like she *knew* that he didn't have any friends and was worried or some shit and it was fucking annoying. Maybe if he could just find some other extras to hang with for a few hours it would get her off his back…?

Knowing he was gonna regret apparently wasn't enough to stop Katsuki from pulling out his phone and texting Ogawa and those other villain extras and asking if they wanted to hang out. Ugh! They were gonna be so smug and unbearable, going on about breaking down his

walls and…

Group Chat

Ogawa: Oooh! Are we finally breaking down your walls, little man?

And there it was. He was regretting this already.

His regret stung a little less, though, when the next text that came was an address to meet them at. So what if everyone else was going to a movie without him? He didn't need any of those extras to be a hero, he could find way better friends than his bullying classmates!

Katsuki shoved his phone back in his pocket and stalked off toward the address Ogawa had given him. He didn't recognize the place, but he knew it wasn't really on the right side of town. In fact, it was kinda close to where he'd saved that one kid a few weeks ago. Katsuki hoped that extra had taken his advice and started actually *training* for the hero course. Maybe even Izuku could have had a chance if he got rid of his noodle arms…

He shook his head as he saw Ogawa and Maki leaning up against a low brick wall that Akiko was laying on, seeing how big she could get her bubblegum bubble before it popped all over her face. They looked like a bunch of no good delinquents. Katsuki scoffed.And to think these losers were actually the *safer* option between his two "friend" groups. Life really was messed up sometimes, wasn't it?

"Hey!" Ogawa gave him a wide grin when he saw Katsuki approaching. "If it isn't the man of the hour!"

Akiko laughed, "So, something awesome must have happened to get the high and mighty Bakugo to hang out with us! What's up, kiddo?"

""Shut up." Katsuki grumbled, but he had to fight to keep a small smile off his face. "So what's the plan?"

The three exchanged a loaded look before Ogawa's grin got inexplicably bigger, "We're taking you on a tour."

Katsuki rolled his eyes, "I grew up in this city, dumbasses. I don't need to waste my money on all the touristy shit the Americans come to do."

“Oh no, we’re not taking you any of those places.” Akiko giggled. “No, what we have in mind is a little more *exclusive.”*

She wiggled her eyebrows suggestively so Katsuki shoved her off the wall. She lost her balance and fell to the street with a yelp, but managed to catch herself. It wasn’t like it was a very long fall. It took a second for everyone to stop laughing after that.

“Whatever.” Katsuki smirked. “So what are we *really* doing?”

“No, we’re being serious!” Ogawa caught his breath and put an arm around Katsuki’s shoulders. “We’re taking you on a back alley tour!”

Katsuki raised an eyebrow in question, and Maki crossed his arms and looked down at him, “You said you’re gonna be a hero, right?”

“Yeah.” Katsuki grinned up at him. “I’m gonna be the best hero you losers have ever seen!”

“Well, I don’t know if you’ve noticed,” Maki huffed, “but you’re not exactly like most hero hopefuls.”

Katsuki froze. He’d thought he was doing better. He was standing up to those useless extras at school. He was attending those stupid redemption meetings. He was even planning on apologizing to Izuku. Was…was none of it good enough?

Ogawa cuffed him lightly over the head, “That’s not a bad thing, man. You’ve got a little bit of a past, but in this part of town, that can actually be an advantage, if you use it right.”

“What the fuck are you talking about?” Katsuki growled.

“You’ve got a unique appeal among villains, kiddo.” Akiko explained. “You’re brash. You swear. You’ve done things you regret. That gives you street cred.”

Katsuki glared at her and was about to say something when Ogawa interrupted, “You’ve been like us, man, which means that thugs and villains are going to respect and trust you in a way that they’re not gonna do for any other hero. A big part of the underground and stopping crime is gonna be the connections you’ve got and the information you can get from them.”

“Let’s be honest, kid, no one want to talk to a hero like All Might about the shady shit they’re involved with.” Maki gave him an

appraising look. “But they might be willing to talk to you.”

Katsuki’s eyes widened slightly as he realized what they were getting at. Once he’d realized his past actions were wrong, he’d assumed they’d put him at a disadvantage if they didn’t stop him from becoming a hero outright, but if what Maki was saying was true, then he might be able to use those parts of him to be a better hero. He still wished he’d never been a bully, but…

“Good heroes use every advantage available to them.” Ogawa smiled. “So, come on, you ready to meet everyone?”

Katsuki shoved his hands in his pockets and followed his friends as they started off down the streets. He needed to pay attention, because somehow, he had a feeling that if Izuku was here with his stupid notebooks, he’d be cheering for him to exploit the hell out of his shitty past mistakes and Katsuki owed it to Izuku to be the best hero he could be.

As they walked into a corner store to introduce Katsuki to the owner, none of them noticed the sharp eyes tracking their movements and judging every single one.

People had died.

Now that it had been a few days since the New Years Nightmare and Izuku’s injuries were actually starting to heal, he had finally gotten the strength to read through the articles and statistics about the attack. There had been thirteen casualties, not to mention the dozens who had had to go to the hospital for various injuries from either the thorns or the fire. Izuku couldn’t help but wonder if he could have done *more.* Maybe if he had focused on saving civilians rather than contacting the heroes, less people would have died. Or maybe he could have separated the fight from the evacuation route so that when Endeavor arrived, there weren’t people trying to get out when the bar went up in flames. Maybe Izuku should have somehow checked whether the wall he was knocking down was load bearing or something, then maybe the building wouldn’t have collapsed.

He had to make up for it. With his injuries and all the articles going around, Izuku had decided to lie low for a little bit, but that didn't mean he was just sitting around bored. He was researching. The berserker was linked to the villain factory, which seemed to be using Queen Bee to find good quirks for their experiment. Considering that she was key to their operation, she most likely had information on the

rest of the group, which meant that all Izuku had to do was find her.

He already knew that the bees could be hacked, but it seemed that the information about the rest of the hive, and more importantly the queen, corrupted when the bee was killed. To find her, Izuku would need to hack one of the bees when it was still alive.

All he needed was a plan.

Conviction: Part II

Chapter Summary

You have no idea how much I've been looking forward to this chapter.

Chapter Notes

So, this and one of my other stories switched places in the update schedule this week. This story was lucky and gets an early update and Cheat Code...well, patience is a virtue.

Now, onto art!

First off, I'm Totally a Bee made an amazing collection of possible hoodies to replace the one Izuku trashed.
X X X X X X

LogarBee
Icyhot_Grenade

And the memes:
X X X X X X X X X

It was late when Katsuki waved goodbye to his friends and boarded the train. Being introduced to the underground had been...weird. Kinda scary, but in a good way, like it was more intimidating than anything else. But still, it was weird to be around villains all day. The annoying part of him that still forgot that villains were *people* kept expecting to be attacked at any moment, which was probably why he still wasn't able to shake the feeling that he was being watched. He simply rolled his shoulders and ignored it like he had all day. There was no need to be paranoid just because some *people* had done some bad things. At the end of the day, he'd done bad things too, so being freaked out like this was dumb and hypocritical. Heroes needed to be better than that.

It was a fairly short ride back to his own stop and the streets were practically deserted, which made the feeling of being watched that much more unsettling. Katsuki shook his head and huffed as he started

walking home. Seriously?! He was back in the good part of town! There was no reason for his stupid brain to still be freaking out! It was fucking annoying!

Or, at least, it *was*… until he felt himself being pulled into an alley as he passed it. That's what he fucking got for ignoring his instincts.

"Fuck!" Katsuki swore and twisted to dislodge the grip of whatever extra was attacking him before blindly swinging his fist in the general direction of where he thought his attacker should be, only to hit empty air. Damn. They were fast.

Katsuki contemplated using his quirk, but dismissed the thought almost as quickly as it came. He was already on thin ice from the sludge villain attack. The last thing he needed was a vigilantism charge three months before the UA entrance exam. He felt the next attack more than saw it, and only managed to dodge at the last second. As it was, the knife that was aimed at his gut ended up slicing through his jeans and he heard his wallet fall out of his pocket and hit the floor, but he figured he could worry about that later, like maybe *after* he'd taken care of the fucker trying to stab him.

He caught movement out of the movement of his eye and aimed another punch, only for his attacker to dodge again, "Stay still and fight me, you goddamn mother fucker!"

"That's not very hero-like."

Katsuki hissed as something sliced his arm, "Shit! You're gonna regret that you…" His stomach dropped like a stone at the same time his body did, "What the...why the fuck can't I move?! What did you do to me?!"

Katsuki cursed again as his brain raced. What a stupid question. It was obviously the fucker's quirk, but what was it? It had something to do with whatever sliced his arm, but he wasn't Izuku. He couldn't figure out a quirk just by looking at a person and he still hadn't even *seen* the guy attacking him.

Speaking of the devil, his attacker *finally* stepped into view and crouched in front of him, allowing Katsuki a first look at his attacker's...well, not his face, because he was wearing a red rag tied around his head like a mask and he didn't even have a nose. Actually, most of his outfit consisted of rags, which was what led to Katsuki's next words leaving his mouth before he could stop them.

“Was there a sale at goodwill or did you just raid a dumpster?”

His attacker’s eyes filled with rage and Katsuki gulped. This. This was how he died. Why did he have to open his stupid mouth. He knew every other word out of his mouth was an insult, so why had he decided to say something anyway? He wasn’t even going to be able to apologize to Izuku, dammit! Why did it have to end here?! He was just starting to become better!

“Does society really expect filth like you to be the next generation of heroes?” His attacker sneered down at him. “No wonder there are so few true heroes left.”

Katsuki’s mind raced in confusion, “What the fuck are you talking about?”

Did this guy know he wanted to be a hero? Or did he just assume because every kid wanted to be a hero? Wait, was *this* who had been following them all day? Ogawa had introduced him as a future hero a couple of times, so that made sense, but why attack him just because he wanted to be a hero? There had to be something Katsuki was missing.

Thankfully, his attacker was more than happy to explain, “You want to be a hero, yet you act like a villain and associate with criminals. You call them your friends and seek them out, which is why I cannot let you live, even if you *are* a child. If villains like you are allowed to live, you will sully the title of hero.”

Ok, Katsuki was actually starting to freak out now. Well, he’d been freaking out before, but he hadn’t been serious about it! Suddenly, his fear flipped the switch over to anger, thank goodness for terrible coping mechanisms, “Who the fuck do you even think you are to judge me?! You’re taking about fucking murder!”

“I am Stain. I stain myself with the blood of fake heroes to cleanse society.” His attacker said, grabbing Katsuki’s wallet from where it had dropped. “And who are you? Just another false idol begging for me to cull you.”

Katsuki snarled as Stain rifled through his wallet, grabbing his ID and holding it up to compare it to his captive, “Katsuki Bakugo. The world will be a better place without your villainy corrupting it.”

He may have already been frozen, but those words still made Katsuki feel like he’d been doused in ice water. Would the world be a better

place without him? His first thought was no, but...but he'd suicide baited his own best freind. He'd bullied dozens of kids. He'd let his teachers get away with quirk discrimination. He was *still* letting his teachers get away with it.

Maybe this Stain guy was *right* .

Katuski was jarred out of his thoughts by a faint rustling of paper, "Hey! Get your filthy hands off those!"

Stain, that fucking murderer, was reading his letter to Izuku. In his other hand was Katsuki's paper listing the kind of hero he wanted to be. Both papers were practically falling apart at the seams from how many times Katsuki had folded and unfolded them during the past few months, constantly pulling them out of his pocket and rereading them every time he needed to remind himself *why* it was worth losing all his lackeys at school or getting into a war of the wills with his teachers. Having somebody that he didn't even know read them, never mind the fact that this person was currently trying to kill him, was disturbingly violating. It was like he was looking deep into Katsuki's soul and reading every single one of his insecurities.

"S-stop! That isn't for you!" Katsuki could feel a tear rolling down his cheek and he hated it. He hated feeling this fucking weak. It was like the sludge villain all over again. Trapped. Unable to move. Helpless. The only difference was that this time, Izuku wasn't going to come running in to save him. Katsuki wished he could move so he could wipe that stupid tear away, but then again, if he could move, would have been able to stop this asshole from reading Izuku's letter. "Stop!"

"You…" Stain glanced at Katsuki, then back at the letter. "You want to be a hero."

"Yeah, asshole, and I'm gonna be the fucking best one you've ever seen." Katsuki tried to force enough anger into his voice to cover the wit was cracking. "So if you'd give me back *my* letter and go murder somebody else, that'd be great."

Stain looked at him oddly, and kept staring at him for what felt like forever before he stood.

"You're immature. You're brash and rude. But you have conviction, which is more than most of those fakes can boast of. Perhaps...perhaps this is simply your way of staining yourself to save others, just like me? I'll let you grow for now, but if you fail to live up to the seeds of true heroism that I see in you," he drew a katana from his belt and

placed the point of the blade between Katsuki's eyes, "then you will be culled. Understood?"

Katsuki would have nodded, but he was still paralyzed from that fuckers quirk, so he settled for spitting at him instead. Stain, like the crazy bitch he was, simply grinned. That wasn't creepy at all.

"I look forward to seeing what you become." With that, Stain turned and began walking away. "Don't disappoint me...Kacchan."

Hive

Chapter Summary

Izuku looks for Queen Bee's hive.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Liz_Cygibi_386 X
FujiRielle X X
I'm Totally a Bee
Kitty
Beep
And does it count as fanart if I drew it?

Memes
X X X

when he'd learned about it. Izuku didn't know why it was such a shock to learn that the police had a file on him. It made sense, since he *was* a vigilante, or acted like one at least, even if he was using a technicality that no one knew about, but he just...he hadn't thought he was important enough to make a file on. Eraserhead would probably be annoyed if he heard Izuku talking like that, something about *the problem child not knowing his own worth again* or something like that, but then again, Eraser would probably also be angry if he knew what Izuku was planning on doing right now. Oh well, he'd forgive him when it all worked out...hopefully.

The problem with tracking down and capturing a live bee from Queen Bee's swarm was that every time Izuku had seen them so far, the bees were *already* doing their thing and injecting random people with trigger, so Izuku didn't really have any idea what they did when they weren't injecting people. Where did they hang out? Did they just fly around? Or did queen bee make them as she needed them so that she didn't have to worry about them being discovered while inactive? How did she make them, even?

Izuku was currently working on the assumption that Queen Bee made them with her quirk, rather than by hand, because that seemed standard for most quirks that involved creating other consciousness. The main hero he was using as an example for his theory was Ectoplasm. His clones were made from the ectoplasm his body produced, but they were capable of independent action just like the bees in the swarm were, but that meant there was a limit to the number of clones he could produce at one time.

The bees seemed to function slightly differently from ectoplasm's clones, though, in that there were many more of them, but there was still that theoretical limit that Queen Bee would run into, depending on what she used to make the bees. Whether she used the nutrients in her body, the metals she physically had access to, or even just her body fat or stamina, she would eventually run out, but since the bee he'd examined hadn't poofed into nothingness when it was damaged, Izuku assumed that once a bee was created, it no longer took any input from her quirk to keep it alive. That meant that the smartest option would be to create them in small numbers and store them somewhere until she needed them.

Because the robots looked like bees and seemed to act like them for the most part from what Izuku had seen, it was logical to assume that there had to be some sort of hive where Queen Bee was able to keep the ones that she'd already made when she wasn't using them. Bees

were a naturally occuring insect and observers wouldn't actually be able to tell they were quirk created robots unless they looked too closely, so the least suspicious course of action would be to have them out in the open like any other beehive so they could hide in plain sight.

When he'd realized this, Izuku had, of course, hacked into all the exterminator services databases and looked at swarms that had been reported in the past several months. He only paid attention to the results where the extermination had failed, then prioritized the remaining hives based on how many times people had tried to get rid of them, since the robots were probably immune to the poisons that would kill real bees. Izuku had then spent the past three days wandering around, visiting each of those locations, and using his laptop to search for the wireless signal that the bees used to communicate with each other.

Which was why when Denki had asked if he was healed enough to hang out, Izuku had immediately suggested going to the diner that they'd gone to a few weeks ago. He really shouldn't have been surprised to find the diner on his search list, considering that Denki *had* said that the owners hadn't been able to find the hive and get rid of them, but oh well. At least with Denki he had a good excuse for hanging around the diner long enough to run his search. Some of the other places he'd tried had been...well, much more awkward, to say the least. There was one where he had resorted to just hiding on the roof, rather than having to talk to the residents of the apartment building. Thankfully those bees had been normal, just like all the others he'd checked, so he hadn't had to hang around for longer than necessary.

Izuku rushed into the diner a few minutes late and helplessly looked around until he heard the waitress who'd served them last time softly laughing at him.

"Oh, um, I'm sorry!" Izuku clutched his laptop bag closer to his chest and tried to look as small as possible, memories of Kacchan's laughter echoing in his head. "Your name's Kotaku, right? I'm just supposed to be meeting a friend, he's...well you know who he is, obviously, he comes here a lot, but…"

"I'm gonna cut you off there." Kohaku rolled her visible eye. "The flirt's over there."

Izuku looked where she was pointing and almost melted in relief when

he saw Denki waving at him with a huge grin on his face, "Thank you so much! I'm so sorry to bother you!"

Kohaku snorted softly as he ran over to Denki, who pushed a milkshake toward him as soon as he sat down, “Hey, I already ordered for you. I hope you like raspberry, I wanted to get you something as sweet as you are!”

Izuku laughed and rolled his eyes, “Your pick-up lines are getting better. Not by much, but still, I guess it’s an improvement?”

Denki laughed good naturedly, “Thanks, dude. I, uh, ended up looking into what you said. You know, heroes using flirting as a weapon? It was a deep rabbit hole to fall down, but it turns out that way more heroes than just Midnight use it. I just can’t stop watching all their interviews and seeing how they interact with people! I don’t know how I’m gonna apply any of it in a fight yet, but it’s just so cool!”

Izuku grinned as his friend started talking faster and faster, which was often the best indication that Denki was really excited about something. It was a habit that Izuku had picked up on since they’d started hanging out. As much as Denki liked to joke about being stupid, once he found something he was interested in, it didn’t take him long at all to become an expert. Izuku thought that was so cool! It was kinda like how he was with quirks!

“So, are you healing up ok?” Denki asked. “Your injuries were kinda bad…”

“Not really!” Izuku denied. “I mean, they weren’t that bad, not that they aren’t healed. I mean, I get that it *looked* bad, but I mean, Mom bought that I was just sick, so…”

“I just think it’s kinda weird,” Denki said slowly, “that you got super injured doing parkour on the same night that new vigilante went viral…”

It took all of Izuku’s self control not to freeze like a deer in the headlights. Did he *know?* But if he did, would it really be so bad? Yes. Yes it would be. If Denki knew he was a vigilante, he’d be so worried and would try to get him to stop, but Denki was so much more open minded than his old classmates and he was preparing for UA, so he might try to convince Izuku to try the entrance exam and be a legal hero. Izuku...he didn’t think he’d be able to handle that. He was finally getting to the point where his desire to die was mostly quietly hanging out in the background most days, and some days wasn’t there

at all, but if he were to get his hopes up, only to have them dashed *again* because he was just so useless…

He wasn't strong enough to handle that.

So he laughed, "Viridian? Seriously? Doesn't he have a speed quirk or something? I mean, he runs from all those heroes…"

"That's the thing though dude," Denki said, "nobody actually *knows* what his quirk is, and you know that nobody's just gonna *assume* a badass vigilante is quirkless."

"Well I don't know what to tell you." Izuku tried. "I got injured from glass, not thorns. You know that. And besides, I saw those videos. Didn't Endeavor set that poor guy on fire? He probably ended up in the hospital after something like that, not with mostly mild burns…"

Denki frowned, "I guess I hadn't really thought about that...sorry."

Izuku inwardly sighed in relief, but figured it'd be best to distract him from that train of thought before he could find the holes in Izuku's excuses. Maybe if he brought up one of the topics that Denki tended to hyperfocus on…?

"So, are you learning a lot from the electricians at your store?" Izuku asked.

Denki brightened, "Yeah! It's really cool! I've been learning all about these different kinds of currents and…."

Izuku smiled slightly and took out his laptop as Denki started to ramble, "Sorry, I forgot to do this one assignment and it's due today. Do you mind if I work on it while we talk?"

"No problem!" Denki gave him a thumbs up and Izuku booted up his computer as his friend started to ramble again.

Izuku would occasionally add an idea for a support item or ask a question about what Denki was talking about, but mostly he was using it as a chance to look for the wireless signal that the bees gave off. He honestly wasn't expecting to find anything. In fact, he was starting to think that this particular lead was a bust and he was going to have to find another way to capture a bee.

Which is why it was such a surprise when he got a match.

Izuku's eyes widened slightly and he managed to pass it off as being surprised by something Denki had said, but his mind was racing as he looked around the diner. Now that he was looking for them, it was easy to see the slight movement in the upper corners of the room where small numbers of the robotic bees were hanging out, which wasn't normal behavior for real bees. Izuku let out a slow breath.

He'd found the hive.

Salt

Chapter Summary

Beekeeping.

Chapter Notes

Yay!!! I'm back!!!
Sorry for dropping off the face of the earth. It's the end of the semester and, for me, the end of my college career! It's been a wild ride and I knew I wouldn't be able to focus on my writing until I had turned the last of the reports for my internship. Thank you all for your patience these past couple of weeks and I'm glad you guys like my stories enough to miss them!

Art!
AEDE
AddaMoose X
This Bee is Out of the Hive
Useless Reptilian Bee X

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X
(Ok, I know I probably missed some, but give me a break, I'm gonna go take a nap)

Izuku may have looked calm on the outside, but inside he was panicking. On the one hand, it was super good to have found the hive because that meant that he could capture one of the bees and see if he had any more luck hacking them, but on the other...he hadn't actually been expecting to find the hive!!! The first day he'd looked, sure, he'd been expecting to find something and so had brought along a bento box to *hold* the bee in, but then Mom had lost hers and needed something to put her lunch in and Izuku hadn't even really thought about it before handing her his, which meant that even though he had written a program that basically acted as virtual honey to attract a bee, he had no way of actually *containing* one.

But, well, he hadn't actually ever had the tools to be successful as a vigilante, had he? He'd basically just gone out and figured it out as he went using whatever he could find, so...Izuku looked around the diner. What could he use? It needed to be strong, since the bee might try to escape and since it was quirk-made it was most likely quite a bit

stronger than a typical bee, so anything plastic was out. He could trap the bee between the table and his milkshake glass, but then he wouldn't be able to take it anywhere else, which wouldn't be good if the hive somehow registered him as a threat. He wasn't stupid enough to take it home, those things probably had trackers, but if he could at least put a little bit of distance between himself and the hive, it'd be better than nothing. So what…?

Izuku's eyes caught on the small glass salt and pepper shakers sitting next to the napkins and he groaned internally. Mom would be so mad! If he did what he was thinking, he wouldn't be a very polite customer, but if he didn't, he wouldn't be a very polite vigilante. Why did he have to make these kinds of decisions? And he couldn't just dump it out all over the table! Denki, the waitress, everyone in this diner would think he was crazy. And however true that might be, it probably wasn't the best idea to just *admit* it!

"Uh, you ok there Izuku?" Denki's voice knocked him out of his thoughts and he glanced up to see Denki looking at him with concern. "It's ok if I was boring you! You know you can tell me to shut up, but uh, you're looking at the salt like it personally offended you…."

"No! You're fine! I'm fine!" Izuku waved his hands frantically. "It's just...uh...it's not, well...it's an experiment?"

"Looking at the salt is an experiment?" Denki cocked one eyebrow skeptically.

Izuku grimaced, "No? But uh...I was just thinking about how um, like you were saying, with the ions and because water is polar, it uh, the salt will conduct electricity? Maybe? I'm sorry, it's probably really dumb."

Denki grinned, "Nah, you're good. Let's try it! Wait, what are we trying again."

"Um, I'm not really sure." Izuku trailed off and grabbed his water and the salt shaker. "But let's start by…"

He unscrewed the top off the salt shaker and upended it into the water, sending an apologetic smile toward the waitress, who thankfully wasn't paying attention as she served another table. With any luck, they'd be gone before she noticed that he'd pocketed the salt shaker. Oh, he was such a bad customer, he'd never be able to come here again and then he'd have to tell Denki that he couldn't flirt with the waitress anymore because he'd *stolen a salt shaker!*

Izuku shook his head. He could worry about that later, for now he had a mission. He turned to his laptop and started his *virtual honey* program on it's lowest possible setting before opening up another window and frantically googling experiments with electricity and salt water. If he didn't attract any bees, he could modify it so that the attraction was stronger, but since he was basically sitting *inside* the hive, as far as he knew, the last thing he wanted was to get swarmed by trigger bees. They probably wouldn't affect him, what with him being quirkless and all, but it would draw more attention than he wanted.

"Ok, um...according to this website, we would need a lightbulb." Izuku looked at Denki "Do we have one of those?"

"Uh…" Denki glanced up. "Probably best if we *don't* steal the one over the table, right?"

Izuku chuckled awkwardly and checked to make sure his program was running correctly before moving to the next experiment in the list, "Uh…maybe just see if you can shock me?"

Denki glared at him, but Izuku simply smiled back, "Come on! It's not like you've never shocked me before!"

Denki chuckled and shook his head, "I guess you're right! Let's do it!"

"Perfect!" Izuku smiled and stuck one finger in the glass. "Now you stick your finger in too and make sure you're not touching me, then use a tiny bit of electricity."

Denki shrugged and Izuku felt the now familiar feeling of static running through him. It didn't hurt, but Izuku knew his Mom would complain about how the electricity wasn't helping his curls behave when he got home. Denki was getting a lot better at control at low voltages too, considering that he was able to just give a tingling shock, rather than a large one.

"It feels tingly, so the salt is definitely working." If Izuku wasn't currently concentrating on three different things, he'd definitely be scribbling in his notebook right now.

"But, I wasn't really trying yet." Denki frowned. "Like, I wasn't trying to *not* produce electricity, but I also hadn't started putting electricity into the water yet."

Izuku's eyes widened and he caught movement in the corner of his

eye. He glanced over toward the wall to see a bee, metallic body glinting in the light, crawling toward his laptop curiously. Keeping one eye on the bee as it got closer, he grabbed the empty salt shaker and forced his attention back to the experiment, “Uh, that’s actually pretty cool! I mean, it makes sense that your natural level of electricity is higher than the average person’s but it also means that the salt is probably slightly amplifying the electricity as well as conducting it. Does that make sense?”

“That’s awesome!” Kaminari said loudly. Izuku winced as the bee almost flew away, but thankfully the digital honey he was using to attract it was slightly stronger than whatever told it to mimic a real bee’s instinct. “Does that mean that if I had a bottle of salt water or something as part of my costume, I could use it to make myself stronger.”

Izuku glanced at the waitress, who was glancing around and looking at their table suspiciously, probably because their experiment and volume was starting to bother other guests. Time to wrap this up.

“It’ll probably be best to give you some range and set traps.” Izuku theorized. He hid his hands behind his laptop screen and carefully scooped the bee into the salt shaker as it crawled across his keyboard before quickly transferring it into his lap and screwing on the lid. “I, uh, think we should try some stuff at the park this weekend, but uh, we should probably leave before things get too *shocking.* Right? Don’t you have school tomorrow?”

“Ugh, don’t remind me.” Kaminari pouted. “Alright, fine. I’ll ask the electricians at work about it too, see what experiments they recommend.”

“Good idea!” Izuku quickly stopped the program and shut down his laptop as he nonchalantly crammed the now vibrating salt shaker deep in his pocket. “I’ll bring a light bulb too!”

“That’s a great idea!” Denki laughed. “Actually, with all these great ideas, maybe we won’t need it. I mean, a lightbulb’s bound to appear above one of our head’s eventually, right?”

Izuku forced himself to remain calm as they paid for their milkshakes and left. The waitress hadn’t seemed to notice the missing salt shaker, but she definitely seemed to realize something was *off,* even if she didn’t seem to be able to tell that it was Izuku. He only breathed a sigh of relief once he had waved goodbye to Denki and made his way

to a rooftop a few blocks away, taking out the saltshaker, complete with a now kind of angry evil bee, to assure himself that he *had* actually taken it.

Mission successful.

Host

Chapter Summary

Izuku isn't having a good day.

Chapter Notes

ART
Cartoon Sleeping Noises
Beep
I'm totally a bee X

MEMES
X X X X X X X

Shouta stared out over the city and scanned for any nefarious activity. It had been a toss up after the New Years Disaster whether villains would be discouraged by the berserker's decisive downfall or encouraged by Endeavor's publicity and, unfortunately for Shouta, it was the latter. Criminal activity had been steadily increasing since, especially once word got around that Viridian was actually out of commission. Shouta and the other heroes knew that Viridian was good at sniffing out crime, but apparently they had underestimated just how effective he was at deterring the local thugs. Just in the last two hours, Shouta had had to stop three different villains who had seemed surprised that a hero had found them without their "Green Guide watchdog" and it was starting to get ridiculous. It's not like the kid's quirk was finding villains or something!

Shouta paused. Maybe it was? Honestly, it wasn't a ridiculous theory now that he thought about it and Viridian had never actually mentioned having an analysis quirk. He would have to have Tsukauchi check the quirk registry and see if a quirk like that even existed, but if he was right about this then it might explain some of the kid's self confidence issues. With a quirk that was only good for finding trouble, Viridian probably wouldn't have had the best relationship with his teachers and peers, and that's if they didn't simply write him off as having a *villain's quirk* like they'd done to Shouta when he was a kid. Discrimination was so illogical, why did people…

He heard the faint whistle of something flying through the air and by this point it was second nature to snatch the marble out of midair. He

smiled as he opened his hand, then frowned and looked toward the problem child himself, who was shifting nervously at the roof's edge. The hoodie was obviously different, but it was definitely his kid, which brought up the question…

"Red? Seriously?" Shouta held up the marble. "Since when is your gear anything but green?"

"They were out of the green ones!" Viridian whined. "I went to three different stores and then finally just ordered some online, but they're on backorder, apparently, because everyone's been buying these stupid marbles as collectables which makes absolutely zero sense because I'm not a hero and even if I was, then they're buying all the green marbles and there's none left for the *real Viridian* , which kind of defeats the point! And then I couldn't find any green hoodies either, because people are apparently cosplaying me, which is even worse! Don't laugh, Eraser, it's embarrassing!"

"Oh yeah, I'm sure fame is absolutely terrible." Shouta said dryly, looking at the kid to make sure he was actually alright. The kid was *physically* alright, but when he reached the hoodie, Shouta did a double take and sighed, "Really, kid? Where did you even get that?"

"Amplifier gave it to me!" Viridian blurted out, tugging at the hem of a black hoodie with a grey hood, the words *if lost, return to Eraserhead* embroidered across the front. "I was just gonna make do with one of Mom's cardigans and return them before she noticed, since she has a couple green ones, but you know how fights usually go for me and I didn't want to ruin my mom's clothes, so when I ran into Amplifier on the way here and she pushed this into my hands, I thought it might be better if maybe...ugh, I'm so sorry Eraserhead! I can take it off!"

While he rambled, Viridian had gradually grown quieter and curled in on himself and hidden his head in his hands. Amplifier had apparently gotten a few sizes too big to be safe, but all that meant was that the kid was almost completely swamped in fabric as he tried to shrink down into a smaller target and Shouta was brutally reminded of just how young this kid was. What had even pushed him to be a vigilante anyway?

"Um, Eraser?" Viridian tentatively interrupted his thoughts. "W-would you like me to take it off?"

Shouta tried to convey a week's worth of exhaustion in a single sigh, "No, it's still cold and it would be illogical to ask you to take it off. I

will be talking to Amplifier about getting you a more *appropriate* outfit."

"That's really not necessary." Viridian tried insisting. "I have one that I orderd online and I can just wear another color until it gets here! Or, um, I could buy another color and try dying it green…"

Shotua huffed in amusement, "I was talking about *armor* kid, not color. You do know that they make kevlar clothing, right?"

"No, those would count as illegal support items." Viridian dismissed quickly.

Shouta cocked an eyebrow, "And that's somehow worse than what you're already doing? Problem child, you are literally an illegal vigilante."

To his surprise, Viridian gave him a shit-eating grin, "Ah, but I'm *technically* not…" suddenly, his mouth slammed closed and whatever confidence he'd momentarily felt was gone along with whatever he'd been about to say, "Oh, um, I had something I needed to show you!"

Oh no, Shouta had had enough students try to distract him that he wasn't about to let that slide, "Viridian…"

Instead of responding, Viridian reached into his hoodie pocket and shoved a salt shaker into his hands. The glass was blackened with soot and when he jostled it, there was a rattle of broken metal inside. He glanced curiously at Viridian, who was looking at him guilty, "Kid? What is this?"

Viridian groaned, "Well it *was* one of Queen Bee's drones. I was trying to hack it."

"I thought you already did that." Shouta pointed out. "It's illogical to try hacking a broken bee when you *know* that the connection to the hive is severed the moment it's destroyed."

"But it wasn't!" Viridian's voice cracked. "It wasn't broken! I captured the bee alive and tried to hack it, but when I tried to follow the code and figure out where the queen was, I must have triggered some sort of anti-tampering mechanism and the bee self destructed before I could get any useful information from it!"

"Let me get this straight." Shouta said, as calmly as he could. "You captured a bee, *alive,* after we told you to stay out of this case, and

instead of, I don't know, telling *any capable adult so we could help you,* you decided to try hacking it yourself."

"I didn't have any of my vigilante gear." Viridian defended weakly.

"Then go to a police station and give an anonymous tip as a civilian!" Shouta countered.

"Like they would have even believed someone like me." Viridian replied bitterly.

"What's that supposed to mean?" Shouta asked

"Whatever." The kid scoffed in frustration. "Do you want the bee or not?"

Shouta sighed again and pocketed the salt shaker, "Do I even want to know how you managed to get your hands on a live bee?"

Viridian shrugged, "It was pretty easy once I figured out where the hive was."

That made Shouta freeze, "What did you just say?"

Viridian looked at him, still pouting slightly, "I said that it was pretty easy once I figured out where the hive was. I just put out some digital honey and the bee just…"

Shouta interrupted him before he could get any further, "Queen Bee's swarm doesn't have a hive."

That made the kid's face scrunch up in confusion, another thing Shouta was extremely used to as a teacher, though he preferred seeing that expression in the safety of the classroom, "But the bees base their behavior off of their insect counterparts. Real bees have hives where they gather when they aren't out doing tasks for the queen, so I figured there had to be a place…"

"There's not." Shota said firmly. "These bees might act real in some situations, but they aren't. They're a quirk."

"But…" Izuku looked between Eraserhead and the useless remnants of the bee. None of this was making sense. He'd found the hive. He'd been to it! There were bees! His digital honey had worked! "But then where do the bees gather if there's not a hive?!"

Eraser groaned and rubbed his face tiredly, "Look, kid, this was never

mentioned in the media to avoid hysteria, and we didn't tell you because *you're not supposed to be on this case,* but...Queen Bee isn't a normal villain. She's like a parasitic wasp more than a honeybee. She possesses a victim, usually a teenage girl from what we've seen, implanting herself inside the victim's brain via the eye socket. The queen will sometimes keep living the host's life or they might run away and form another life as a kind of cover for their villain activity, but their personality becomes a mix of the host and the queen. The bees live *inside* the host's body, or sometimes around it if there's too many, but there isn't a hive like there is for real bee swarms. So believe me, you might have gotten lucky and found a bee, but there's no way you found the hive, because the hive is..."

"Inside the queen." Izuku's stomach dropped as a million realizations clicked into place at once. The waitress at the diner, Kohaku, had an eyepatch from an accident that really didn't make sense, considering that she said it was from her own quirk. Her personality had reportedly changed after this accident, almost like she had combined with someone else. She acted angry or upset whenever the bees were brought up.

Oh no.

"We need to go." Izuku took a running start and jumped onto the next rooftop, running as fast as he could for the diner. Hopefully she was still at work, but if she wasn't then the manager must have her contact information and they'd be able to figure out where she lived. "We can save the host, right?"

Eraser landed beside him and fell into step, "It's been done, but the queen will only abandon a host when the body dies, from what we've seen, to avoid dying herself. The hosts that we've saved in the past have had to be resuscitated."

Ok, Izuku had not been prepared for that when he woke up this morning. Actually, scratch that, he hadn't been prepared for any of this! He hadn't even been planning on finding a bee to hack and even after that he'd just been hoping to find the queen before she realized that he'd hacked…Izuku almost tripped as a new realization filled him with dread.

"Eraser…" Izuku tried to keep his voice from trembling. "What would happen to the host if the queen felt threatened? Like if someone hacked one of her bees and possibly knows who she is?"

Shouta resisted the urge to curse as he kept pace with Viridian. He'd been hoping that the kid wouldn't make that connection, but him stressing out would only make the kid freak out worse. The only logical option was honesty, for now, if only to avoid any unpleasant surprises when they arrived at wherever Viridian was leading him, especially if Shouta was right in suspecting that the kid had somehow discovered the queen when looking for the hive. If only the kid was actually a hero instead of an ill-supported vigilante, then he could have actually read all the files and been at the meetings rather than scrounging up whatever he could find on the internet, which was very obviously incomplete. Even for experienced heroes, working without proper information could lead to deadly mistakes, but that wasn't something he'd wanted the kid to learn this young.

"It will depend on the host." Shotua said simply. "If there's a reason why that host in particular was chosen and the queen feels she's at risk of discovery, then she will probably remain in the host and simply go to ground. If the host was only chosen because of availability, however, then the queen will most likely...abandon them and move onto the next host."

Viridian's expression tightened, but he didn't make any other response and Shouta didn't know whether to be glad or not that the kid appeared to have picked up on what he'd said between the lines. On the one hand, it meant that Viridian didn't mess up out of malice or obliviousness, which meant he had potential, but the emotions this kid must be going through...Ugh, why had Shouta let Nemuri convince him to go into teaching?

Shouta called Amplifier and Rock Lock for back-up as they ran, telling them to stay on standby in case they needed it. They had been running for about ten minutes when Viridian finally stopped and dropped to a crouch. Shouta knelt beside him and followed his eyeline to see an american style diner, lights still on and only half cleaned. The employees were nowhere to be seen.

"It's the waitress." Viridian said softly. "Her name is Kohaku and she has copper hair, like the metal, um, that's probably not actually important, but she checks all the boxes. Eye patch, personality change, surrounded by bees, everything. I don't know if she's still here, but…"

Shouta quickly gave their location to the other heroes, then glanced at Viridian. His first instinct was to tell the kid to stay put while he checked out the diner, but goodness knew that the kid wouldn't ever actually do that, "Stay behind me kid, Doesn't matter who she's

possessing, the queen is dangerous, so be ready for anything."

They silently made their way across the street, Viridian shadowing his footsteps perfectly even though Shouta could feel the anxiety coming off the kid in waves. When the reached the door, Shouta activated his quirk and he could see Viridian loading a marble into his slingshot out of the corner of his his eye. They nodded to each other and burst through the door ready for a fight, only to be met with eerie silence. Shouta kept his quirk activated and gestured for the kid to keep quiet as they weaved around the tables, waiting tensely for any suspicious movement or sign of attack, but there wasn't even a fly buzzing around as far as Shouta could tell.

Finally, they reached the front counter and rounded the corner to go behind it, only for Shouta to freeze as he realized he'd been right and judging by the way Viridian sucked in a breath behind him, he'd been too slow to keep the kid from seeing. When the queen felt threatened, she had decided to abandon the host and had gotten rid of any loose ends, including the host herself, which meant that the only sign Queen Bee had ever been in this diner was the still-warm body of the waitress on the floor.

Save a Life

Chapter Summary

The fallout

Chapter Notes

Sorry this is rough. This chapter was harder to write than I expected and I didn't have a lot of time this week because, you know, holidays! That's why I'll be linking art and memes next week.

Other than that, Merry Christmas!

Izuku felt like he was watching a movie, because there was no way this could be real. Maybe it was a murder mystery and Eraserhead was the daring detective that would ultimately save the victim and catch the killer. That had to be it, because Izuku obviously wasn't the hero of the story and maybe that would explain why the body on the floor didn't feel *real.* At any moment, the director would stand up from one of the tables behind them and yell *cut* and Kohaku would sit up and wipe fake blood from her face as she laughed at the stupid looks on their faces. Somehow, Izuku knew that wasn't going to happen.

This wasn't a movie.

The realization hit him like a truck and he felt a sick feeling of dread crash down on him. This wasn't a movie. This was real, wasn't it? Izuku stumbled backwards and turned to run, anything to get away and *stop looking.* A part of him knew it wouldn't help, but somehow maybe if he wasn't looking he could pretend that the weird numb feeling was telling the truth and that none of this was real. It couldn't be real because if it was real then that meant that Izuku had…

Before he had even taken two steps, Izuku felt something grab his wrist and instinctively knew that it was Eraserhead's capture weapon. This was it. This was the moment he got arrested and the fact that he was quirkless wouldn't even help him because someone was dead now and it was all his fault and Eraser was going to take him to jail and his mom and kacchan would be so disappointed and All Might was right and he couldn't be a hero because what kind of a hero got people killed?!

The capture weapon on his wrist pulled him back toward Eraserhead and Izuku didn't even fight it, but instead of handcuffs like he'd expected, Izuku found himself being wrapped in strong arms.

"Kid? Don't...problem child, just…"

It was like Eraser didn't know what to say as he held Izuku in place, but his voice didn't sound angry, just sad, which was somehow even worse because that destroyed the last barrier that was preventing Izuku from crying. He didn't even really notice when the tears started flowing or when he started apologizing, he just knew that there was now a large wet patch on Eraserhead's shoulder and the only sound he could hear was his own frantic apologies muttered on repeat.

"I'm so sorry." He whimpered again. "I'm...I didn't..I didn't mean...I'm such an idiot and I deserve...it's all my fault…"

"Kid…" Eraser groaned in frustration. "Just...ok. I know you didn't mean to, just let it out."

Somehow that just made Izuku cry harder. Leave it up to a deku like him to mess up this badly. He should have just taken Kacchan's advice and jumped. Sure, maybe Kacchan would have gotten in trouble and people would have gotten hurt but at least no one would be *dead!*

A tiny bell jangled as the door opened and Amplifier and Rock Lock finally arrived, ready for a fight, not that there was any villains left to take down besides Izuku, who didn't deserve to resist arrest. They took one look at Izuku crying in Eraser's arms, but couldn't see the body from where they were standing, so they just took in the scene in growing confusion.

"Hey Eraser, I thought you were gonna need backup." Amplifier began. "What's going on…"

Eraser simply jerked his head toward the body as Izuku sobbed harder. Amplifier and Rock Lock came around the counter and froze as they were finally able to see *everything.* Rock lock swore and started doing chest compressions, not that they would do any good, as Amplifier made the call for an ambulance.

"The kid found Queen Bee, but she abandoned the host before we could get here." Eraser filled them in. "Looks like a purposefully traumatic exit to tie up loose ends."

Amplifier finished up her call and hovered anxiously, her hand raised

like she wanted to touch him, but wasn't sure if that would be ok, which made Izuku feel even worse. He didn't deserve to be comforted. Somehow, over the course of the past few minutes, he'd gone from trying to run away from the body to not being able to tear his eyes away, like he was afraid that he would forget what he'd done if he looked away.

Maybe looking was the least he could do? If he couldn't go back and fix his mistakes, then maybe the least he could do was sit with the consequences of his actions and take responsibility for them? He felt Eraser shift slightly, moving to block his view. He looked tired and worried, but there was a depth to his expression that Izuku wasn't quite used to, maybe because he didn't just *look* at the hero all that often.

"Kid." Eraser grabbed him by the shoulders and looked deep into his soul. "Promise me you won't disappear again."

Izuku didn't get it. Why would Eraser want him to stick around? It would be best for everyone if he was just gone. Sure, maybe they'd miss him for a while and his mom would be sad, but then he wouldn't be able to fuck up this badly again.

Shouta noticed the kid's eyes flick to the side slightly, trying to look behind him, but he shifted again to block the kid's view. What was done was done and he couldn't change the past, he knew that all too well, but he'd become a hero to save as many people as possible. There was nothing he could do for Queen Bee's host, but he needed to make sure there weren't *two* deaths from this whole shit show. God knew the kid's mental state was fragile enough already without blaming himself for a murder, but Shouta didn't know if he could handle another month of searching obituaries for the kid's face.

Viridian still hadn't answered him and Shouta almost growled in frustration, "Kid. There's nothing you can do for her now, but *you need to stay alive,* got it? Heroism is...it's dangerous, kid, you know this. You've almost died so many times…"

"Then why haven't I?" The kid's voice sounded so broken. "Why am I still alive? I can't even die right!"

"Stop that kid." Rock Lock came up behind them, apparently realizing that there was no point in trying to revive the old host. "You can't blame…"

"It's my fault, though!" The kid's mental state shifted to anger and

Shouta couldn't help but be grateful that it was *something*. "I...I should have left it to the heroes…"

"Yes. You should have." Shouta said bluntly. Lying to the kid was illogical and would only hurt him in the long run, since Viridian was smart enough to figure out those lies on his own. "But saving lives isn't an exact science. People fuck up. People die. But you have a lot of lives left to save kid, starting with your own."

"Eraser's right." Amplifier finally put a hand on his back. "I don't know exactly what happened, but...we don't want to lose you kid."

Viridian seemed to think about that for a second and Shouta looked at him intensely, "Kid. I need you to promise us that you'll stay alive tonight."

If the kid didn't promise, Shouta was going to take the kid in and get him help, no matter that it would probably destroy whatever hesitant trust the kid had in him. Honestly, he should probably do that anyway. Vigilantism really wasn't a good coping mechanism and it definitely wasn't a replacement for the therapy that the kid so obviously needed.

"Kid?" Shouta promised.

Izuku looked into Eraser's eyes. He was just doing his job, trying to save people's lives, even if they didn't deserve to be saved. Izuku took a deep breath and pushed all of his feelings down as far as they could go. He could deal with this later, but it didn't seem like they were going to arrest him, so he needed to get home so he could break down in private.

"Ok." Izuku didn't know if it was a lie or not. There was still too much going on, but… "I'll stay alive."

The *for now* was implied.

Hidden

Chapter Summary

Everyone has to deal with the aftermath of recent events.

Chapter Notes

Thank you everyone for your patience these last few weeks!

New Year, New Update Schedule!
Each fic in the ftwoan series will be updating **every eight days!**
I personally will be updating every other day.
Fic order is: Mastermind, Viridian, Deku, Cheat Code.

art!
Dadzawa
opalizero
hornetblanches1120 X
bookcat9
Dabi best bro I'm totally a bee X X
Liz_Cygibi_386
[IHM]
Cartoon Sleeping Noises

Memes in end note because I accidentally broke Ao3!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Eraser hadn't wanted him to leave, Izuku could tell. It was only logical, so he didn't want to blame him, but it was still kinda annoying to have to focus on being stealthy and losing a tail when all he wanted to do was fall into bed and never wake up. Finally, after using every bit of stealth he'd picked up from spending nights around heroes, Izuku managed to get rid of that weird tingle in his spine that said he was being watched and was able to go home.

He crawled in his window and barely had the energy to shed his weapons and switch his jeans out with pjs before he collapsed onto the bed. Izuku distantly realized that he should probably take off the stupid hoodie that Amplifier had given him, but he was tired and it was comfy! It wasn't his usual hoodie, so it wasn't like he actually *had* to worry about anyone seeing it and realizing he was Viridian, right?

There was another part of him, buried deep at the moment, that was screaming as loud as it could that those were all just excuses and that the real reason he didn't want to take off the hoodie was because it was a physical reminder that there were people that would miss him if he died. Izuku didn't let himself listen to that part. If he did, he knew he'd just feel guilty, because he didn't deserve to be wrapped in a hoodie-hug from one of his favorite heroes, so he chose not to overthink it, instead giving into the bone deep exhaustion and pretending that everything would be better in the morning.

Shouta really needed a drink, but the sun was barely even up, so having alcohol in his system right now would be the height of irrationality. Still didn't mean that he wanted to deal with any of the paperwork from last night.

At least they were almost done. It was one of the only positives of the whole situation. It had killed him to let Viridian leave like that, but he trusted the kid. He knew he wasn't going to break his promise, which meant that they had at least another day where the kid would be safe and then they could deal with everything. Add that to the fact that Shouta was the one who first discovered the body and needed to be on site when the police arrived, and it basically led to the perfect storm leading to him, a licensed hero, letting a suicidal kid known to be relapsing, walk away alone.

He hated it.

Shouta sighed in exhaustion as he signed the final page. Maybe he should get Nedzu to help him track the kid down. It seemed like a betrayal of trust, but if it would keep the kid safe, then…

His thoughts were interrupted by a kid in a middle school uniform pushing open the front doors of the police station with a tad more force than was strictly necessary. The kid slouched up to the front desk where Sansa was sitting, hands deep in his pockets, and Shouta would almost be tempted to think the kid was worried about something if he wasn't acting like such an obvious delinquent.

"Yo, fur ball." The kid grumbled. "Amplifier anywhere around here?"

Shouta's eyes almost widened with surprise, but he was dealing with a teenager, so it was only logical to expect the unexpected. Still, a kid with enough delinquent tendencies to call a cop *furball* walking straight into a police station and asking for a specific hero? Maybe he was just eager for a distraction, but it made him curious, which is how

he found himself approaching the desk.

“She had to run to the restroom real quick.” Shouta volunteered. “She should be back in a minute.”

The kid looked him up and down, looking unimpressed, “What are you supposed to be? A hobo?”

Shouta scoffed, “Try a hero, kid.”

The kid raised an eyebrow at him, “Seriously? How do you ever expect to get popular if you dress like that?!”

“Not every hero has to be popular, kid.” Shouta huffed. “Some of us don’t like dealing with the vultures.”

“...oh.”

Shouta almost rolled his eyes. Apparently no one had ever told the kid that before. It was one of his least favorite things about the hero industry, that push toward popularity. It led to kids like this who just didn’t know that underground heroics were an option. It was frustrating, but if Shouta had the power to change it, he would have already done so.

They waited in somewhat awkward silence for a moment before the kid spoke up again, “So if you’re a fucking hero, what’s your name.”

“Eraserhead.”

Shouta said his hero name like it was a challenge because in a lot of ways it was. It was rare that even the students in his class had even heard his name, much less random punk kids who walked in off the streets, but he supposed there was always a first for everything.

The kid apparently heard the challenge in his voice, because he glared at Shouta for a long moment as he tried to place him, then scoffed, “That’s a stupid name.”

“Yep.”

His blunt answer made the kid laugh and Shouta’s eyes nearly widened in surprise. With...well everything, he’d been expecting the kid’s laugh to sound cruel like a bully’s, but it just sounded tired. In fact, it was more similar to one of Shouta’s rare chuckles than what he’d expect based on how the kid presented himself.

“My…” The kid hesitated. “This kid I used to know, he probably would have known about you. Probably could rattle off a dozen facts about you, too.”

Shouta was about to deny this, because he was underground for a reason, but they were interrupted.

“Wait, was that a laugh from the great Katsuki Bakugo?!” Amplifier’s voice called from behind them in exaggerated shock and Shouta turned, rolling his eyes when he realized she was clutching her chest dramatically. “Did you break him, Eraser?”

“Shut up, Loud Bitch.” The kid, Bakugo apparently, said good-naturedly.

That just made Amplifier laugh, which even though it was annoyingly loud, Shouta was oddly grateful for. After everything that had happened that morning, they could all use a little distraction. He looked more carefully at the kid. Amplifier seemed to take his rudeness and swearing in stride, and there didn’t seem to be any malice behind it, so maybe the kid wasn’t as much of a delinquent as he seemed? Either way, he was still a punk.

“Ah, Eraserhead! How rude of me not to introduce you two!” Amplifier grinned. “This is Bakugo. I think I told you about him. That kid who volunteers with my villain redemption group?”

Shouta did remember. So this was the kid who was self aware enough to realize he needed to make changes before he could be a hero and was willing to take steps to make that happen. It made his behavior make a lot more sense. He *was* a delinquent or, at least, he had been, and now probably didn’t know any other way to act. He could probably use a little more work, especially if he wanted to be a popular hero, but the base was there.

“To what do I owe this visit?” Amplifier asked. “Shouldn’t you be in school?”

“Doesn’t start for another twenty minutes.” Bakugo grumbled. “And I…I needed to talk to you about something.”

“Alright.” Amplifier shrugged, clearly conveying that it wasn’t the weirdest thing that had happened all day. “Shoot.”

Bakugo shot a look at Shouta, probably wanting a little bit of privacy and Shouta was about to honor the kid’s wishes and walk away when

he bit the bullet and just started talking, “You ever heard of some guy who calls himself Stain?”

Shouta and Amplifier shared a look. Was Bakugo really asking about the hero killer? How had he even heard that name? They’d been working to keep it out of the media as much as possible!

“Big guy?” Bakugo prompted. “Katana? Way too many knives? Stupid paralyzation quirk when he cuts you? Manic obsession with heroes being worthy?”

How did he know so much? Shouta knew Stain’s quirk had been written about before, but his motivations were still largely unknown, even to those investigating him, so how…?

“Well, if you don’t know about him, you should.” Bakugo ran his hand through his hair and huffed in frustration and...embarrassment? “He’s fucking insane.”

“You sound like you’re speaking from experience.” Shouta said slowly.

Bakugo looked at him like he was an idiot, “No, I just saw him on a billboard. Of course I’m speaking from experience! He fucking tried to kill me!”

Shouta and Amplifier both froze. Even back when he’d been Stendal, Stain had been known to go after anyone he had an issue with and while it was rare for him to go after kids, it wasn’t unheard of, which brought up the question of how this kid survived the encounter.

“But...Bakugo….” Amplifier hesitated. “Stain usually goes after heroes or villains. You’re not either, so…”

“So he thought he’d nip me in the bud before I could become a hero.” Bakugo snarled. “I’m not an idiot, I know how I act. And before you ask, he changed his fucking mind and decided to spare me. *Let me grow* or some shit.”

Shouta raised an eyebrow curiously, “Do you know why?”

Now he was sure that the kid was embarrassed. Bakugo looked at the floor, “Guy’s fucking insane, nothing he does makes sense.”

Shouta looked at Amplifier and they silently agreed not to press him for answers. Yet.

Amplifier placed a hand on Bakugo's arm and spoke softly, "When was this?"

"A couple nights ago." Bakugo grumbled.

Shouta crossed his arms, "And you didn't tell us then because…?"

"Because I thought I could fucking handle it!" Bakugo snapped. "I'm gonna be a hero! I need to be strong and…"

"And rely on others." Amplifier said firmly. "I know we've talked about this in group, but you don't have to do everything alone, Bakugo. And you shouldn't!"

"Whatever." Bakugo adjusted his backpack and kept glaring at the floor. "I've gotta get to class, just...don't let that guy Stain corner you."

He looked them in the eye before he turned to leave, "He's fucking terrifying."

Inko knew that Izuku's sleep schedule was messed up. Ever since switching to online school, he mostly slept at odd hours and she had a sneaking suspicion that he had several hours in the early morning that he did homework instead of sleeping, but there were days like today when she wondered if there was something else going on. Izuku hadn't left his room all day, which was odd, especially because it was her day off and he usually at least came to eat dinner with her. His light wasn't even on and she couldn't see the light from his laptop, so she knew he wasn't just getting distracted with his classes, which meant he was still in bed.

She knocked a few times before pushing his door open hesitantly, "Izuku, baby? Are you ok?"

Izuku was curled up in his bed facing the wall, but he hadn't been asleep. When she came in, he looked back at her and sat up quickly, giving her a bright smile that was obviously fake considering that she could still see the puffy eyes and tear tracks that meant he'd been crying.

Her heart clenched slightly. She knew the rates of depression in teens and how those risks were increased in the quirkless, and she'd hoped that things would get better for Izuku after transferring out of Aldera, but apparently she'd been wrong. Or maybe it was just a bad day.

She hoped to god it was just a bad day.

“Um…” She smiled awkwardly, hesitant to address the elephant in the room. Izuku would tell her if something was wrong, right? “I’ve never seen that hoodie before, um, is it new? Eraserhead’s one of the heroes you like, right? I remember you mentioning him when you were a bit younger.”

“Oh!” Izuku looked down to see what he was wearing and turned bright red. “Um, yeah! It’s, uh...custom merch? Yeah, custom merch! I just, uh, really like him?”

Inko didn’t really know how to respond to that. Izuku liked a lot of heroes, but this Eraserhead must really be something special if he was willing to spend his money on custom merch of the hero. Still, talking about the hoodie had given her an idea.

Izuku was probably afraid of worrying her. He had always been a considerate child, quick to wipe away his tears if it meant he could comfort someone else who was crying. If he was in pain, he probably wouldn’t tell anyone. He would just keep it to himself so he’d be the only one suffering. But that brief moment talking about the hoodie, it had distracted him, so even if Inko couldn’t force him to tell her what was wrong, the least she could go was distract him from whatever was bothering him until he felt a little better.

The first step would be getting him out of this dark room.

“I was just about to make a batch of cookies.” Inko smiled. “I thought I’d take them to my coworker. You know, the one who was injured during the New Years Disaster?”

An unreadable expression crossed Izuku’s face, but it was quickly replaced with a smile, “That sounds like a great idea, Mom!”

“She actually has a daughter around your age.” Inko said carefully. “I thought maybe you’d like to come help me deliver them?”

Again, that same expression passed over his face and Izuku looked briefly torn before he took a look at Inko’s puppy-dog eyes and crumpled, “Alright.”

Inko smiled and pulled Izuku out of bed, “Good. Now I was thinking chocolate chip, but maybe with their family’s quirks, we might want to add some extra ingredients…”

Chapter End Notes

memes!
X X X

Gratitude

Chapter Summary

Izuku visits Inko's coworker

Chapter Notes

Sorry this is a tad late...I was tired and depressed.

Art!
g-asaky
Sarapp97
dahfloofysmol
Very Evil Bubbles
Rain
Shigisofti Tomura Dadzawa (ninja) opelizero
hornetblanches1120 X

Memes!
X X X

Izuku was quiet and Inko hated that she didn't know whether that was normal for him or not. Her Izuku, the one she remembered from when he was little, before he was diagnosed and everything went wrong, that Izuku was always talking. He was always rambling about something or another, usually heroes, and had this spark in his eye that Inko loved, but over the years things had changed. It was so gradual that she had hardly noticed, but looking back now it was obvious that he'd stopped rambling as much. Instead of talking for hours without hardly breathing, he would ramble for a few minutes, then clamp down and apologize for annoying her. Instead of that sparkle…

Inko never wanted to repeat seeing him as empty as he had looked when she picked him up from that school with a broken arm.

Getting him out had helped...some. He'd thrived in his new classes, blowing through them like they were nothing and there had even been some times when he'd rambled to her without immediately shutting down. His new friend had helped too. Inko still hadn't actually met Kaminari, but she was hoping that Izuku would be confident enough to bring him home someday soon. At this point, Inko probably knew just as much about Kaminari's quirk as the boy himself did!

Quirks were one of the few things Inko had noticed that would reliably bring Izuku out of his shell, which was why it was so heartbreaking that Izuku was being so quiet today. He would normally be fascinated with a quirk-related challenge like this, but today he had only given short answers, and then only when Inko asked him a question, and he hadn't started rambling even once. Inko hated it.

Izuku pulled at the sleeves of his new Eraserhead hoodie again. He had spent most of the short time since Inko had pulled him out of his room playing with the string or the sleeves, and any other day she would have been tempted to giggle and take a picture of the way he had cocooned himself inside it. Alright, she was still tempted, but if Izuku found the hoodie comforting, Inko was sure she'd have plenty of other chances to fill her camera roll. She *was* curious as to why, if Izuku had specially ordered the hoodie, he hadn't gotten the correct size. The hoodie practically swamped him, almost like whoever made it had thought he was a few years older than he was, but it made it easier for him to disappear into the fabric, which seemed to be exactly what he needed right now, so Inko wasn't going to question him on it. She was just grateful that he had found *something* to comfort him, even if what he found *was* just a hoodie. If he would just trust her enough to tell her what was wrong…

Inko shook her head and finished tying a ribbon around the cookies. It was going to take time to rebuild Izuku's trust in adults after what his old school had put him through and forcing him to confide in her would probably do more harm than good at this point, especially since she still haven't managed to get Izuku to open up about the details of how his teachers treated him. The best thing she could do for her baby was be patient and give him plenty of opportunities to come to her. Why was being a parent so hard?

Inko forced a small smile and turned to Izuku, "Ready to go?"

Izuku nodded quietly and stood. Inko's eyes widened in surprise when she realized he was moving to take off his hoodie and she hurried to stop him, "Why don't you leave that on? It's a bit chilly outside. It's just hero merch, right? It's nothing to be embarrassed about, even if Eraserhead isn't as popular."

Izuku looked at her strangely and shrugged, but left the hoodie on, which Inko decided to count as a win. She had no idea why he'd tried taking it off to leave, but she wasn't about to let him leave behind the one comfort item that seemed to be anchoring him though...whatever he was going through. And she wasn't lying! Lots of kids wore hero

merch, and if anyone had a right to wear merch from lesser-known heroes, it was Izuku. He'd been learning everything he could about them since he was a baby!

They were silent as they rode the train. Izuku looked out the windows and tried to keep his eyes from straying to the tallest buildings. He knew what Mom was doing. She was trying to get him out of the house, even though it was the last thing he wanted to do right now. After all, if he never left his house again then he'd never be able to accidentally hurt someone again.

He wondered if Kohaku had had a family. She must have, right? Kaminari had said that she was a couple years older than them, if Izuku remembered correctly, but she was still a teenager. She still had parents, friends, classmates. Would they miss her? Or would they say that she had already been gone by the time she died, since she had been possessed by Queen Bee for so long? Did that even make a difference? Would they ever forgive…

Izuku shut down that train of thought quickly. He didn't deserve anyone's forgiveness, especially not the forgiveness of the family of someone he'd gotten killed, so there was no point in wishing for something he could never have. He'd learned that lesson the hard way after ten years of wanting to be a hero.

Mom checked her phone before ushering them off the train and Izuku froze as they left the train station and he saw the cones and hazard tape cordoning off one of the buildings down the street. The diner looked different during the day.

"Hmm," Mom paused and looked at the crime scene. "I wonder what happened?"

Izuku gulped and forced himself to shrug and keep walking. Mom sighed and followed. She'd probably been hoping to pull him into a conversation, like she'd been doing all day, but, Izuku hadn't read the hero news this morning. Not that he didn't know what had happened, but...he didn't know why he was being so quiet today. Normally he was a lot better at faking it, but today there just didn't seem to be a point. Sure he could pretend to be happy, but he'd *actually* been happy for the first time in his life and it had apparently upset some kind of cosmic balance in the universe, so why should he even try?

It didn't take long after passing the diner for Izuku and his mom to reach their destination. It wasn't a *large* house, by any means, but it

put the Midoriya's small apartment to shame. Mom had barely even knocked once when the door swung open to reveal a girl Izuku's age with long green hair and a wide mouth. She looked them up and down, but Izuku couldn't read her expressions well enough to tell whether she liked what she saw or not, which made him shrink further into his hoodie. Why had he let Mom talk him into this?

"You must be the Midoriya's." She said bluntly.

"Oh, um…you're Beru's oldest, aren't you Asui-chan." Mom seemed just as discomfited by the girl's expressionless eyes as Izuku was, but she took it into stride, "I'm Inko Midoriya, I work with your mother. Is she here?"

"Call me Tsu." Tsu, apparently, turned on her heel and headed back further into the house, leaving the door open for them to follow. Izuku shared a glance with his mom and she gave him an encouraging smile as they took off their shoes and went inside.

"Mom's doing a lot better, Kero." Tsu said, leading them down the hall and into the kitchen. "She's planning on returning to work as soon as she can. She gets lonely, kero."

"I can understand that." Mom said kindly. "It's just Izuku and I at home, but Beru is always so kind at work. It just hasn't been the same without her."

Izuku nodded along politely with the conversation, but found himself getting distracted by all the windows. He hadn't noticed from the outside, but the Asui home had far more windows than a typical house. Was it an aesthetic choice or…

"Why are you staring out the windows?" Tsu asked suddenly. "Do you want to leave?"

"Wha...no!" Izuku jumped and stuttered as he tried to justify himself in any way that would be more polite than *yes I want to leave, but was looking at the windows for unrelated reasons.* "I, uh, was just wondering about the windows themselves. Because, um, Mom said that your family all have frog-type quirks, so I was expecting things like water features...not that you have to have those! But, um, I guess frogs sunbathe?"

Izuku winced awkwardly, but Tsu surprisingly didn't react to his word-vomit beyond a polite nod. Or maybe it wasn't surprising. The frog-like features probably made it difficult for her to emote normally.

If he were fighting someone with that quirk, could he use it to his advantage? Izuku pinched himself and forced his mind away from his vigilantism. After last night, maybe he didn't deserve to save people.

"Izuku has always loved quirks!" Mom volunteered. "I even asked for his advice on how to modify the cookies to better suit your family!"

"Mom!" Izuku hissed, too many memories of people reacting...poorly to his analysis coming to mind as Asui blinked at them.

"Really?" She didn't seem put off, but then again, Izuku didn't know her well enough to read her yet. She turned to Izuku, who couldn't help freezing like a deer in the headlights at the sudden attention. "What modifications did you make?"

"Well, um…" Izuku tugged on the ends of his hoodie again and glanced at Mom, who smiled encouragingly. "Nothing much. I mean, I know that most frogs are carnivores and that insects comprise a majority of their diets, but we didn't really have any of those at home...well, not ones that are for cooking, and I know it can be a sensitive subject and we didn't want to offend you if you *don't* eat like frogs, which is entirely valid! But um…"

Tsu tilted her head, "So they're just normal cookies?"

Izuku deflated, "Mostly? I mean, we added some nuts and protein powder because we figured that a frog quirk would require a little more protein in the diet than a standard human, so…"

"That's so thoughtful!" A woman's voice croaked behind them. "I mostly use cricket flour here at home. A little more robust than wheat flour, but still wonderful for baking."

"Beru!" Mom lit up with a smile as she strode toward the woman and gave her a hug. "I'm so glad to see you up and about! How's your husband?"

"Ganma's fine." Beru answered, gesturing for them all to sit at the table. "I was much more affected by the attack than he was anyway. Toads are a tad more resilient than frogs!"

She gave a croaking laugh. Izuku couldn't breathe. *He recognized her.* There had been a lot of people that ran past him during the New Years disaster, but he distinctly remembered thinking *that woman has an aquatic quirk, I need to to focus on getting her out of the fire,* before dragging her out of the bar. The man with her must have been her

husband.

He'd saved them.

"So this is the son you're always bragging about." Beru turned to Izuku and frowned. "Do I know you from somewhere?"

Izuku's eyes widened in panic and he clenched his teeth together to avoid falling into an incriminating mutter storm. He hadn't even thought about the possibility that he would come across someone he'd saved in real life. And of course it *had* to happen on the day he was wearing his Eraserhead hoodie. He remembered Beru being pretty out of it when she'd saved him, so there was a good chance that she wouldn't be able to place him, but her husband might be able to, unless he was too distracted with everything else going on to pay attention to the random vigilante. Would they tell Mom? How would Mom even react? She'd be heartbroken!

"Um...Mom probably has pictures of me in her office, right?" Izuku chuckled awkwardly and frantically thought of any way he could do damage control in this situation. "Like she said, it's just her and I and I've been told I look a lot like her, so uh, that's probably it?"

Beru looked at him for a long moment and Izuku held his breath before she nodded resolutely and took one of the cookies, "Yes, you do. That must be it."

"So As...Tsu said you're recovering well?" Mom asked. "I'm glad. I just can't imagine being out on a date and finding yourself in the middle of a villain attack like that!"

"It was definitely not how I would have chosen to spend the night, no." Beru said bluntly. "It was terrifying the way that a single villain could take an entire city block hostage like that. And then when Endeavor arrived…" Beru shivered. "Well, I almost wish he'd left the whole thing to that vigilante. At least *he* wasn't a danger to those around him."

Izuku sank down slightly in his seat. She might think that now, but she'd only seen Viridian in one fight. If she knew that the vigilante that saved her was just a quirkless kid pretending to be useful…

"He could have done better." Tsu piped up.

"Tsu!" Beru scolded.

“What? He could have.” Tsu shrugged. “He used himself as a target, which made it harder for him to save people and get them out.”

Izuku hadn’t...he hadn’t thought of it that way before. He knew that if he died to quickly, then he wouldn't’ be able to save people, but...he wasn’t sure if he knew how to fight in a way that didn’t make himself the target. Wasn’t that the only thing he was good for anyway?

“I’m sure the kid is out there beating himself out over it and figuring out how to do better.” A man, Ganma probably, considering that Izuku thought he looked familiar, walked into the room and immediately grabbed a cookie and bit into it. “Shouldn’t you be more worried about preparing for the UA exam?”

“Oh, you’re applying for UA?” Izuku turned to Tsu. “My friend is applying too! Maybe you’ll be in the same class!”

“I have to get in first.” Tsu said. “But I’ve been training even harder since Mom got injured. The heroes arriving should always make the situation *better,* not worse.”

Izuku nodded frantically in agreement and glanced around the table, which is when he realized that Ganma had been staring at him like a puzzle that needed to be solved ever since he’d spoken up. Izuku shoved half a cookie in his mouth and tried his best to disappear farther into his hoodie.

“Ah, Ganma, that’s Inko’s son, Izuku.” Beru said quickly. “He looks just like his mother, doesn’t he? That’s why I thought he seemed familiar at first.”

“But Dad hasn’t met Midoriya-san.” Tsu pointed out. “So it shouldn't matter that they look alike.”

Ganma’s eyes brightened and he gave a booming croak that was probably a laugh of some sort, “Nah, but it *is* interesting!”

Izuku wanted to disappear. It seemed like everything was just conspiring against him to make today the worst day ever and now the only thing he needed to make it even *better* was running into Kacchan or having Kaminari text him saying that he didn’t want to be friends anymore. He let mom engage the family in polite small talk for a half hour. Izuku had about a million and a half questions about the Asui’s quirks, but for some reason couldn’t find the motivation to ask them. Finally, they were interrupted when the front door slammed open and two grade-school age kids raced through the house.

“Cookies?!” The boy grinned widely and grabbed one. “Awesome!”

“Samidare! Be polite!” Tsu scolded. “You can at least tell the Midoriya’s that the cookies taste good.”

“Oh yeah.” Samidare spoke with his mouth full as the little girl with him grabbed . “They’re amazing!”

Mom laughed, “Well, I think that’s our cue to leave. Thanks for letting us drop by.”

“Anytime.” Beru smiled. “You and your son are always welcome here.”

“I’ll walk you out.” Ganma offered.

He slammed his palms down on his thighs before standing and walking them back down the hall to the door. He waited politely as the Midoriyas put on their shoes, but right as they were about to leave, he put a hand on Izuku’s shoulder to hold him back. Izuku finched and looked back, not knowing what to expect. Had he said something rude? Had they not liked the cookies? Maybe they were allergic to nuts? No, that was illogical, they would have said something. Still, there had to be some reason why Ganma was staring at him like that.

It seemed like his wide eyes were staring straight into Izuku’s soul as he spoke softly, “Thank you, son.”

Izuku froze, “...what?”

Ganma grinned widely and patted him on the shoulder, “You know, for the cookies! They were amazing! We’ll have to get the recipe from you sometime.”

“Of course!” Mom returned Ganma’s smile and Izuku numbly followed as she ushered him out the door.

Somehow, he didn’t think Ganma was just referring to the cookies.

Connections

Chapter Notes

Art!
Cloud boy
KatChicken
Bone Bee X X
Peyttii
Panda's just here

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X

Katsuki really couldn't tell how he had ended up here. If someone had told that little punk from his second year of middle school that not only would he be hanging out with people on a regular basis that didn't think he was the greatest thing since sliced bread, but that he would actually know their *names?* He'd have laughed in their faces and probably called them idiot extras to boot, so it was just hard to wrap his head around the fact that a ragtag group of former villains had not only managed to pull him off his high horse, but actually managed to make him genuinely enjoy spending time with them.

It made Katsuki sorta happy, not that he'd ever admit that out loud.

Ogawa pulled him into a headlock and ruffled his hair as he led the group down another alley, "Hey Bakugo! What's going on in that crazy head of yours?"

"Bold of you to assume there's anything happening at all!" Akiko laughed.

"Come on, Akiko, go easy on him, he's just a kid." Maki said.

"Hey!" Katsuki shoved Ogawa off of him. "Who are you calling kid?"

"You are literally still in middle school, Bakugo." Maki laughed. "That's the definition of *kid."*

Katsuki ran his fingers through his hair to fix whatever Ogawa had done to it and scowled, "Shut up."

He was getting surprisingly good at navigating the back alleys of the city now that he'd taken to hanging out with Ogawa and the others

outside of group. He could find his way to most of the popular hangouts on his own and even knew which bars were theoretically the best for finding people like info brokers or dealers who would be able to help him once he became a hero. That was how he knew Ogawa was leading them to one particular bar that was popular with people like vigilantes, minor villains, and even civilians who were a little more lax about things like legality.

The place they were going, along with most other bars like it, was what was known as a grey space. Akiko had explained that they were like informal neutral spaces where people of all... *moral stances* could come together without being at each other's throats for once. Katsuki still hadn't seen any underground heroes like Eraserhead in any of the ones he'd visited so far, but he figured that was probably because he showed up in the afternoon, not the middle of the night like that hobo.

"Hey! Drill Girl!" The bartender grinned as they got to the bottom of the stairs, which looked super creepy, considering that half his face was held on with staples. "Come to give me your number?"

"You wish, Dabi!" Akiko laughed. "First off, aren't you gay? And second off, you know I've sworn off dating deadbeats like you!"

"Ouch!" Dabi clutched his heart dramatically, but his smirk ruined his little show. "I'll have you know I'm an upstanding member of society with a real job!"

"Uh huh." Ogawa smirked. "Because being a bartender for a grey space is a completely upstanding career."

"You know, I could kick you out for that." Dabi threatened, not that there was any real heat behind it. "And for bringing the kid! Come on, Ogawa, this is a bar, not a daycare."

"Yeah, yeah, as if you actually care." Ogawa rolled his eyes and sat down at the bar. "You know Bakugo here is getting to know the grey spaces for when he's a hero."

"Sure..." Dabi looked him up and down, "I'm guessing you want a juice box, don't you kid?"

Katsuki glared at him and slumped down into one of the bar stools, "Fuck you."

"If only my kid brother had half your backbone." Dabi drawled.

“Orange juice it is!”

Katsuki rolled his eyes, but accepted the glass. He didn’t get why the bartenders at these places enjoyed giving him juice so much, but for some reason they thought it was funny to rub his age in his face. Yeah, he knew middle schoolers didn’t typically get dragged to places like this, but he was having to accept that he wasn’t really a *typical* kid. Most kids, for example, weren’t actively trying to take advantage of their former role as a bully to be a better hero, so Katsuki figured he could take a few jokes about his age.

“So…” The bar stool creaked ominously under Maki’s weight as he sat down. “Anything interesting happening lately?”

Katsuki leaned forward slightly and paid attention. From what he’d learned from Ogawa and the others so far, phrases like that were used to open conversations to trade info. Most of the time, a question like that would be followed by a vague conversation about what info or resources the person asking had to trade, but sometimes, like now, the contact wouldn’t have very valuable info, so they’d volunteer information and a price might be decided after.

“Hmm..not really, honestly. The murder of that waitress has everyone spooked. According to some of my contacts, she was actually pretty high up in one of the trigger operations, so things are gonna be quiet for the next week or two at the very least.” Dabi stopped wiping down the glass he was cleaning. “Actually, I do have something that might interest you. Word on the street is that your brat here has a bit of competition.”

Ogawa glanced at Katsuki nervously, but he just shrugged. This was the first he was hearing about it.

Ogawa turned back to the bar, “What do you mean by competition?”

Dabi shrugged, “I don’t know everything, but I’ve heard from a few people that Stain’s got his eye on this potential future hero who somehow convinced him not to kill him. All I know is that the kid apparently acts a bit like a villain, but he managed to impress the hero killer, so he must be pretty good. Oh, and that his name is Kacchan, apparently.”

Katsuki couldn’t control the groan that left him at that, which made the rest of the group turn and look at him curiously. His face got hot and he downed the rest of his juice as an excuse to avoid their questions. Considering that they were still looking at him when he

finished, that plan had been a failure.

Well, now he *had* to say something, or else these extras were never going to let him hear the end of it, “I was thinking that creepy freak would at least keep his mouth shut, but apparently not.”

“Wait…” Akiko gasped. “Is Stain talking about you?!”

“Who else acts like a villain but wants to be a hero anyway, you idiot?!” Katsuki growled. He was just ready for this conversation to be over. “The asshole cornered me in an alleyway last week and tried to stab me.”

“Ok…” Ogawa looked both impressed and skeptical. “But how did you convince him not to kill you?”

“And why does he think your name is *Kacchan?!”* Akiko added.

Katsuki sighed and dragged a hand down his face. He *could* just leave, but he knew they weren’t gonna just drop it, so it was better to get it over with, otherwise it was just gonna get brought up again and again until he eventually gave in. “He knows what my real name is, he just likes being an asshole. You guys remember that exercise Amplifier had us do? The one where we wrote a letter vowing to become better or some shit?”

“Of course…” Maki said. “But, Bakugo, what does that have to do with the hero killer?”

“I’d written mine to the kid I used to bully. Signed it *Kacchan* , cause that’s what Iz...what that kid used to call me. I happened to have the paper with me when Stain decided to be a psycho and attack me.” Katsuki scoffed. “That motherfucker read it, which for the record, I’m more mad about than the whole trying to kill me thing. Something about me vowing to be better changed his mind about killing me or something. Said I had the seeds of heroism or some bullshit like that, so he wouldn’t kill me *yet.* Then, he decided to be a jerk and rub it in by calling me the stupid nickname I’d put in the letter.”

“Yeah, that *does* seem like something he’d do.” Dabi smirked at him. “He’s probably doing it intentionally too. Probably sees you as whoever you put in the letter, rather than who you are today, so he’s trying to mould you into who you promised that kid you’d be.”

“Oof.” Ogawa looked at him sympathetically. “That sucks, man, sorry.”

Katsuki shrugged, “Whatever. Just means I got one more reason to be the best hero, right?” He turned back to Dabi. “What do we owe you for the info?”

“Are you kidding?” Dabi laughed. “Knowing who the mysterious *Kacchan* is that Stain keeps ranting about is more than enough! Good luck you brat.”

Katsuki rolled his eyes and huffed as Akiko finally gave into her laughter, “I’m so sorry, Blasty, but *Kacchan?!* It’s just so funny! You’re expecting this wide-eyed kid with stars in his eyes, but instead...!”

“Instead you get an asshole with a swearing problem!” Ogawa gave a shit eating grin. “Oh my god! That’s spectacular! Just the irony of it!”

Katsuki scowled, “Are you *trying* to get an explosion to the face?”

“Oh come on, *Kacchan,* ” Maki, the traitor, joined in, “You gotta admit it’s pretty funny.”

Katsuki crossed his arms and went back to his glass, which had suspiciously been refilled, “I hate all of you.”

That didn’t do anything to make his friends stop laughing.

All for One did not appreciate meddling kazoo players interrupting his symphony. Once Queen Bee had gotten the feeling the one of her drones had been compromised, she had immediately cut ties with it and gone to the doctor with her concerns, who had ordered her to abandon her current host and move into the next target that they had already discussed. It was, annoyingly, much sooner than All for One had hoped to make that move, since he would have preferred a *guarantee* that the host would be going to UA, rather than Queen Bee having to take the exam in her body, but it wasn’t enough of a disadvantage to stop the plan from moving forward. The young woman that Queen Bee had suggested had a useful enough quirk that *should* keep her from being discovered again, which was unfortunately becoming quite important. Every time Queen Bee was forced to change hosts was one more clue that heroes and *meddlesome vigilantes* could use to track her down, so the best they could do was make sure Queen Bee trained adequately so that she could take her place as a spy within UA once the time was right.

It was simply a shame that she hadn’t been able to point to who exactly had attempted to hack into her hive. She had pointed to a

handful of patrons that had been acting suspiciously at the dining establishment her old host had worked in, but on further investigation none of them had any sort of quirk that would have allowed them to hack into such a complex system. One of them had had a promising electricity quirk that *might* have helped, but after looking up the boy's grades, All for One had dismissed him as a possibility. An electricity quirk on its own wouldn't be enough to successfully enter Queen Bee's systems and the boy's grades did not reflect the level of intelligence necessary for the task, which put them back to square one.

All for One was fairly certain that it was, in fact, that troublesome vigilante, since he was known to hack into the heroes' communication systems and must have a quirk that allowed him to control technology in that way or at least analyze weaknesses in their systems, which was why he had immediately ordered Queen Bee to leave her old host's body visible at the diner and hang around while getting used to her new body. He had been correct in assuming that the vigilante would return there, but had been frustratingly wrong about how easy it would be to follow him home and discover his identity. Queen Bee had not been used to her new host yet and so had somehow managed to lose the boy. It was infuriating.

He would almost be tempted to get rid of her entirely for her failures, but she still had a part to play in the next movement of his symphony, which would be ready to begin as soon as he acquired one final musician. He would simply need to ensure that she and the other players kept an eye out for pesky audience members and their troublesome kazoos. One couldn't interrupt a symphony if they were safely tied up backstage, after all.

Shift

Chapter Summary

I'm sorry

Chapter Notes

Art!
I'm totally a bee
Presudeosk X
Ebbuixx
FandomKitty*
Snickerdoodlez
Shadowplazz
Inklussionist
The.name.is.hey
Salmon Meister
Sad Kazoo solo
Selenicum
|Jack|
Noelle125
Crow
Rhaia

Cosplays!
Grey
Chocolatecat07
em._spencer._art
Yes, I cosplayed my own characters, what are you going to do about it?

Memes in the endnote!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku scaled the wall of the alley, ignoring the growing number of scrapes on his hands as he left yet another criminal zip tied to a dumpster for the police to find. He'd lost track of how many criminals he'd apprehended so far that night. It had to have been more than five, but honestly he didn't want to keep track. He just figured that it was easier to throw himself into fights than it was to face the battle that was raging in his head right now. The little imaginary Eraserhead on his shoulder was telling him to be logical. Yes, he'd messed up, but

he'd saved more people than he'd allowed to die. Without him, the Asui kids might've become orphans, so he had to be doing at least *some* good, right? On his other shoulder, however, a little imaginary Kacchan was yelling at him that vigilantism was just one more thing he couldn't do right.

It was just easier to ignore both of them.

Thankfully his online order for a new hoodie had come in sooner than he had expected, so even if he still had to use the wrong color of marble, he could pretend that things were back to normal. Kind of.

"Busy night, huh?"

Izuku jumped as he heard a voice speak up behind him, and almost relaxed when he realized that it was just Eraserhead, but then tensed as he remembered what had happened *last* time they ran into each other. So much for pretending things were normal.

"Eraserhead…" Izuku forced out an awkward chuckle, "Fancy seeing you here…?"

Eraser rolled his eyes, "Because I'm obviously normally asleep at this time of night, problem child."

He sat down on the edge of the roof and glanced back at Izuku in a silent invitation to sit down next to him, but Izuku hesitated. He wasn't sure what Eraserhead had to say to him, but after *everything,* it couldn't be good. He'd told Izuku to stay out of the trigger investigation. Izuku hadn't. Someone had died.

Finally Izuku decided that he deserved whatever lecture was coming his way, so it'd be less painful to just sit through it and get it over with right? They sat in semi-awkard silence for another long moment before Eraserhead spoke up, "We can't keep doing this kid."

"…I know." Izuku wrapped his arms around himself. "I need to leave the investigating to you. I can't just go off on my own and do things without telling the heroes."

"Well, yeah, that too, but that's not what I'm talking about." He placed a firm hand on Izuku's shoulder and looked him in the eye, "You can't be a vigilante forever, Viridian. You know that, right? It's not a good long term plan."

Izuku froze, "I, uh, guess I hadn't gotten that far? I never really

intended it to be…"

"Be long term. I know." Eraserhead nodded. "You weren't planning on living this long, were you?"

Izuku shook his head and shrunk in on himself a little more. He supposed it was just one more thing to add to the long list of things he'd failed at. Leave it up to a deku like him to not even be able to die right.

Eraserhead sighed and ran a hand through his hair, "Kid...you know that's not a bad thing, right?"

Izuku shrugged, but didn't answer. Sure, he'd saved some people, but he'd also hurt some people. At this point, he honestly didn't know whether the world would have been a better place these past few months if he'd just taken a swan dive live Kacchan told him to do in the first place.

"You're using vigilantism as a crutch, problem child." Eraser said finally. "It helped you out when you were in a bad place, but now? You need therapy, kid. *Actual therapy*. Not just beating up villains until your brain stops screaming that you're a terrible human being and should have done better."

That...was a little too accurate to be comfortable. "How…?"

"How did I know?" Eraser scoffed. "You're forgetting I've lost people too. That friend I told you about? The one who was killed during a work study? I was there when he died."

"Oh…" Izuku didn't know how to respond. "I...I didn't know that."

Eraserhead shrugged, "I never told you. I don't talk about it a lot, for obvious reasons, but the fact is that Shirakumo and I went to fight a villain we were woefully unprepared for and he paid the price. I didn't even know he was gone until the fight was already over. I can't tell you how many times I've wondered if he would have survived if I'd just been a little better of a hero."

"How did you make those thoughts go away?" Izuku whispered.

Eraser raised an eyebrow, "How do you think I knew you'd be out here? I threw myself into training. I kept fighting until I just couldn't think anymore. That's how I know it doesn't help."

“But…!” Izuku tried to interrupt, but Eraserhead stopped him with a look.

“I bet you’ve been cutting yourself off from that friend you made, haven’t you?” He asked.

Izuku shut his mouth and stared at the scrapes on his hands. Denki had been texting him all day, asking him if he’d seen the news, but how was he supposed to face someone after he’d basically killed their crush? Even just talking about it made Izuku feel a phantom vibration in his pocket and he froze, “That’s...that’s different.”

“Oh really? Because it’s exactly what I did.” Eraser said. “Your friends are there for a reason, problem child. You’re supposed to be helping each other through stuff like this. What you’re doing really isn’t healthy, kid.”

“But what am I supposed to do?!” Izuku hated how broken he sounded and he wiped furiously at his eyes in an attempt to stop the tears. “Vigilantism is the only thing I’ve ever been even *slightly* good at! If I can’t be a vigilante, then what am I even supposed to be?”

“You can be a hero.”

Izuku did a double take. He was so shocked that he even stopped crying. Eraserhead said it like it was the simplest thing in the world. A logical conclusion, not something that could turn Izuku’s entire worldview on its head in less than a sentence.

“Don’t…” Izuku turned away. “Don’t tell me that.”

No one had ever told him that. Not Kacchan. Not Mom. Not even All Might. Izuku wasn’t sure he could handle hearing it from Eraserhead.

“Why not, problem child?” Eraser asked. “It’s true. You’ve got potential and experience.”

“Wouldn’t the commission have a problem with that?” Izuku deflected. “I’m sure they don’t want people like me getting hero's licences.”

“You’d be surprised.” Eraserhead said. “There’s actually an entire program designed to help people like you.”

“Who, suicidal teens?” Izuku joked. Maybe if he could just get off this topic, he could forget that Eraserhead wouldn’t even be bringing this

up if he knew Izuku was quirkless. “I think I heard about that in an assembly one time…”

“Don’t try to change the subject, kid.” Eraserhead glared at him. “Vigilantes. Obviously, the commission doesn’t want a lot of you running around without licenses, so they created a rehabilitation program that would basically act as a sort of parole after you’re taken into custody. As long as you meet the requirements…”

“Requirements that I don't meet.” Izuku cut him off. “I’m not even a real vigilante.”

It didn’t even matter what the requirements were. Due to him not *technically* being a vigilante, he didn’t qualify. He was completely certain that the hero commission would never approve a quirkless kid to take part in a program like what Eraser was describing, not that Izuku deserved to be able to take part in it anyway.

“And why not?” Eraserhead pushed. “Just because you’ve made some mistakes? Just because there were some people you failed to save? That doesn’t make you any less of a *real* vigilante, problem child, and it won’t make you any less of a hero either.”

“That’s not…” Izuku groaned and aggressively stamped down on the tiny spark of hope that Eraser’s words were trying to light in his heart. “People like me can’t be heroes, Eraserhead. It took me a long time to come to terms with that and this whole conversation isn’t helping!”

“Other vigilantes have done it.” Eraser argued. “You met the Crawler, right? He’s one of Ingenium’s sidekicks now, but that wasn’t always the case. He used to be a vigilante, just like you, so if he can do it…”

“No.” Izuku said firmly. He didn’t know how he hadn’t made that connection after meeting the Crawler, but it didn’t matter because even if Eraserhead thought they were the same, they weren’t. The Crawler had a quirk. A useful quirk that was perfect for hero work, but Izuku? He was nothing more than a quirkless kid desperately pretending that he had a place in the world. “I’m not going to be a hero Eraserhead.”

“And I’m sorry, but I’m not giving you that choice.”

Izuku’s head whipped up to look at Eraserhead, who had activated his quirk, “I want you to choose to take place in the program, Viridian, but the fact is that I’ve let this go along for long enough. You need help. Help that vigilantism can’t give you and I’m sorry, kid, but both

as a hero and as someone who cares about you, I can't let you keep destroying yourself like this. I have to do what's best for you, even if it hurts both of us. So, problem child, you can either agree to participate in the program of your own free will or I can take you in and have a judge mandate your participation. What's it gonna be?"

"I…" Izuku froze and looked at Eraserhead, who looked completely serious. That must be why he had activated his quirk, to keep Izuku from fighting back, which would have probably worked if Izuku had a quirk to fight with. He was actually planning on arresting him! "You..you can't do that!"

"Unfortunately, I can." Eraser said. "Well, I can't actually force you to be a hero, but if you get arrested, it'll be a choice between that and juvie, with the program being the logical choice. Please, kid. I don't want to arrest you. Just...let me help you."

Izuku stared at him in shock. For half a second, he actually considered just giving in and just going with Eraser but then his expression hardened and he shifted slightly. There was no way that a quirkless kid could be a hero. If he let Eraserhead arrest him now, the offer for the rehabilitation program would be taken off the table as soon as they looked at his ID. Sure, the vigilantism charges would also go away, but they'd tell his mom and she'd force him to stop and he couldn't let that happen.

"I'm sorry, Eraserhead." Izuku smiled at him sadly. "But I can't be a hero."

Izuku jumped.

Shouta saw the kid's decision in his eyes moments before he jumped and he shot his capture weapon toward him, only for the kid to drop off the roof and onto the nearest fire escape. He swore under his breath and jumped after the kid to give chase.

He'd known there was a possibility would try to run when he'd decided to give him that ultimatum, but he'd talked it over with Tsukauchi and some of the other heroes that worked with Viridian the most and they had all agreed that it was the right decision. The kid had proved time and time again that he was capable of being a hero and Tsukauchi had assured them that there was no way that the hero commission would reject his application for the program, especially with all the positive media attention that Viridian had been getting. It was in the commission's best interest to get him off the streets and

legalized as soon as they could.

But, of course, all that depended on the kid. Shouta didn't understand why Viridian wouldn't let them help him! He was already saving so many people, and becoming a hero was the next logical step. It would give him more resources, more gear, and more connections to be able to save even more people. He hadn't wanted to break the kid's trust like this. He'd been actively avoiding it, but like he'd told the kid, this had gone on long enough.

If nothing changed, Viridian wouldn't ever get better.

Which was why he was willing to chase after the kid and try to capture him. Try being the operative word, apparently. He underestimated how much Viridian had improved over the past few months. He couldn't help but think of how easily he would have been able to wrap the kid in his capture weapon when he was just starting out, but now he was giving him a run for his money. The kid had always been fast, of course. There was a reason that had been his original MO, after all. But now that he had months of experience with parkour and stealth under his belt, Shouta would have been almost proud of how hard it was to keep up with him if he wasn't so annoyed. Why wouldn't the kid just let them help him!

The kid dropped off another rooftop and Shouta skidded to a stop as he tried to figure out which way to go. He heard the clink of a marble hitting something and couldn't help smiling. Viridian was still a kid, wasn't he? He was probably trying to use the old trick of creating a diversion in the opposite direction that he planned to go. Shouta shook his head and headed in the opposite direction to the noise.

It was only a matter of time before he tracked the kid down.

Izuku held his breath as Eraserhead took the bait, then slowly uncrouched from his hiding place behind a dumpster and ran in the same direction that he'd shot the marble, being sure to keep to the shadows as he made his way home. It wouldn't take long for Eraserhead to figure out he'd tricked him, so Izuku didn't waste any time taking off his hoodie, tying it around his waist to hide his weapons and switching streets, heading toward the nearest train station, wiping away the tears that were starting to flow again despite his best efforts.

This was going to make things a little more difficult.

Chapter End Notes

Memes!
X X X

Friendship: Part II

Chapter Summary

Interpersonal Bonding.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Liceurban
Toshi Arbees X X
Margret loves Ramen
Kaden
Quebril
Microo
Shigisofti Tomura

Cosplay!
I couldn't resist

Memes at the end!!!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Inko held her breath as she tiptoed back into Izuku's room and put his phone back on his pillow. Sure, the shower was still on, so it was *very* unlikely she'd get caught, but still, it was better safe than sorry. Whatever funk Izuku had been in for the past few days hadn't let up yet and Inko knew that she just needed to be patient and let it pass, but...she just felt so helpless. It was like when Izuku was diagnosed all over again! He'd just barricaded himself in his room and wouldn't tell her how she could help!

She hadn't meant to invade his privacy. She hadn't! It was just that when she'd decided to grab his laundry when he got in the shower, his phone had started vibrating. It was obviously a phone call, so she checked the caller ID so she could tell Izuku when he got out! That was it! That was all she was going to do!

But then the phone had stopped vibrating and the screen had lit up with the missed call notification:

Denki Kaminari

3 missed calls

Izuku didn't have many friends. Inko *knew* that. With what had happened at that school, it was a wonder he'd found the courage to make friends with Kaminari at all, but...had something happened between them? Even if it hadn't, maybe Kaminari would know why Izuku was so upset? Inko would even take him just being there for Izuku at the moment, so that he didn't have to feel so alone.

...so she may have *borrowed* Kaminari's contact information.

What Izuku didn't know wouldn't hurt him, right? And she could always apologize later! But Inko didn't know what else to do and it couldn't be healthy for Izuku to completely isolate himself from his friends like that! She forced her guilt down under a layer of determination as she shakily typed out the number in her own phone now that she was safely back in the kitchen.

The phone rang quite a few times before someone picked up, "...Hello?"

"Um…" Inko winced. Was there a non-awkward way to introduce yourself to your depressed son's best friend? "Is this Kaminari?"

"If you're calling about my car's extended warranty, I have bad news for you." The boy said seriously. "I can't drive."

Inko snorted before she could help herself, shocked that Kaminari's sense of humor was every bit as bad as Izuku had warned her about. When she finally managed to stop laughing after a few seconds, she gasped, "Sorry, I didn't get the chance to introduce myself. I'm Inko Midoriya, Izuku's mother, and I am definitely *not* calling to ask you about your car's extended warranty."

"Oh!" There was a scramble on the other end of the phone and Inko winced as something crashed. "Ow. Um, sorry! I could've sworn you were a spam call, so I was just trying to...well, kinda spam you back? It was just supposed to be a joke, but you're not! Not that I thought you were a joke, just a robo-caller, but um…"

"Are you ok?" Inko asked, holding back a giggle before forcefully reminding herself that her son's friend might be hurt. "Did you fall?"

"Um...no. My homework might need to be reorganized, but uh...I'm good." Kaminari laughed hesitantly. "What about Izuku? Is he ok? I haven't heard from him and he's kinda been ignoring my texts…which

is fine! I'm really not trying to be clingy, not that taking to my friend's mom is really helping my case, but I'm just worried because I didn't know if something had happened to him. "

Inko sighed, "I was actually hoping you could tell me. Izuku...well he hasn't been himself for a few days now. I've been trying to cheer him up, but haven't had any luck. Did you two get in a fight or something?"

"Not that I know of…" Kaminari said slowly. "But, uh, I think...well, I might know why he's been so...well, not a friend, but someone we know, she...she got caught up in villain attack and she, uh, she didn't make it."

Inko gasped.That poor girl! Of course that explained Izuku's behavior! He was grieving! Why was he trying to go through it alone?!

"I know I was pretty shocked when I heard the news," Kaminari continued, "which is why I was trying to reach out to Izuku, to make sure he was safe and taking the news well, but uh, that obviously didn't work…"

Inko heard the water turn off and panicked. She needed to wrap this up, "Would you, uh, would you like to come over for dinner? I just feel better if...well, neither of you should have to be alone right now."

"Sure!" Kaminari answered. "I mean, if Izuku is ok with it. I kinda get the feeling he's avoiding me right now…"

"I think he's avoiding everyone right now." Inko said sadly. "Which is all the more reason he should have a friend, right? Even if Izuku retreats into his room, I'll at least get to meet you right?"

"Yeah!" Kaminari practically yelled, but he sounded cheerful, so Inko was going to count that as a win. "I'll see you later!"

"Good." Inko smiled. "I'll text you the address. See you soon!"

She hung up right as she heard the bathroom door open and she set the phone down as innocently as she could and started cooking, despite the fact that she knew Izuku couldn't see her and wasn't even paying attention. She had a lot of work to do.

"Why are you doing so much for me?" Katsuki accused. "I'm just a little jerk who showed up at your stupid reform group one time. Why

are you doing this?"

Currently, he and Ogawa were sitting on a wall overlooking one of the cleaner areas of the beach. Akiko had had work, a legal job this time she assured them, and Maki was on a date with his girlfriend, so Ogawa had insisted on getting icecream and sending pics to the others, just to rub it in their faces. The two of them had, of course, sent appropriately enraged responses and promises to get pizza the next time they were gone, which had made Ogawa and Katsuki laugh their asses off. Overall, it was a good day, which didn't do anything to make Katuski feel better.

He didn't deserve any of this.

Ogawa licked at his ice cream thoughtfully for a moment before humming, "Well, I mean you were there…"

"Haha, very funny." Katsuki deadpanned.

"No, I'm being serious!" Ogawa swung around to look at him seriously. " *You were there.* You went to the reform group by choice, not because anybody forced you to. Akiko, Maki, hell, even me, we had to get kicked in the butt and faced with prison to even show up and yet there you were, showing up every week just because you knew you wanted to change. Do you know how rare that is?"

"It's not that fucking special." Katsuki grumbled. "If it's your damn fault, it's your fucking responsonsibilyt to fix it."

"You see, that." Ogawa laughed. "That's what I'm talking about. Most people try to blame everything else, but not you. You take responsibility for the shit you've done and are trying to be better. I guess we just wanted to be a part of that, you know? Make sure you didn't end up messed up like we did."

Katsuki rolled his eyes, "You're not *that* messed up."

"Yeah we are." Ogawa's grin faded and he looked out over the beach. "Look, my life was never easy. Dad has eight arms, and Mom's quirk lets her change her hair and skin to match a bunch of different animals, but neither of them ever looked exactly *human,* you know? So we ended up on the wrong side of society before I was even born. It's hard to get jobs with mutation quirks."

Ogawa sighed, ignoring the way that melted ice cream was starting to run down his hand, "And then it somehow got worse when my sister

and I were born. It wasn't like we could just inherit one of our parent's quirks, no! That would be too easy. Instead, our hair took on characteristics of animals that happen to have eight limbs." Ogawa gestured toward the tentacles on his head. "I got a gross octopus and I was the *lucky* one. My sister? Imagine having spider silk for hair."

Katsuki thought about that for a moment. He thought *his* quirk put him in a box, but having a quirk associated with octopuses and spiders? If kids were being nice, they'd call quirks like that gross, but most kids would straight up think they were scary. And if the kids were bullies, it wouldn't take that much of a mental leap to go from *gross* and *scary* to *villain's quirk,* just like that purple-haired kid Katsuki had saved from a beatdown that one time.

Katsuki took a bite out of his own ice cream, "That sucks."

Ogawa gave an amused huff, batting away a bee that was trying to eat the melted ice cream off his hand, "Yeah, you're telling me. Arakune got the brunt of it, obviously. Kids on the playground would always run, saying that if they played with her, she'd summon spiders on them. She tried telling them that her quirk didn't work like that, but…"

"But they obviously didn't listen." Katsuki finished. He remembered so many times that Izuku would try to make a new friend from another class or something, only for their classmates to warn them away because obviously Izuku would steal their quirks, since he didn't have one of his own. Why were kids so messed up?

"The friends she *did* make were outcasts too." Ogawa scowled. "And delinquents. It didn't take long before smoking behind the gym moved onto shoplifting and petty theft and before long, I got dragged into it too. It wasn't like I had a whole lot of other options, right? It was either hang out with Arakune and her friends or try to get along with kids my own age and what middle schooler wants to hang out with the *sea witch* ."

When he sighed again, he sounded frustrated, but tired too, "Maki and Akiko have similar stories. I know Akiko's shared some of hers before. The point is, we're all kinda messed up. And then in walks this kid, obviously lost, who isn't afraid to get his hands dirty?" Ogawa shrugged. "It's like the golden opportunity we never got growing up. And then we learned you were a bully, and it's like...a giant fuck you to all the kids that used to bully us, you know?"

“Huh…” Katsuki didn’t really know how to respond to that. “So it’s not that you think I’m special or something. I was just willing to put in the work.”

“Pretty much!” Ogawa shrugged and threw the rest of his forgotten ice cream in with the rest of the trash at the beach. “But, hey, don’t let it get you down, we still like you!”

“Yeah right, like I even care!” Katsuki griped. “Let’s get going. The old hag wants me home in time for dinner.”

Izuku was lured from his room by the smell of his mom’s cooking. He didn’t necessarily *want* to eat, he was still worried about how he was going to be a vigilante now that the hereos were actually going to *try* to catch him, but he was hungry enough to make up for that, especially once he remembered that he really hadn’t eaten since the day before. He pulled at the hem of his Eraserhead hoodie, hoping it wasn’t too wrinkled, but decided that Mom probably didn’t care, considering she seemed to like the hoodie for some reason.

“Mom? What’s for dinner? It smells really…” Izuku froze, “...good.”

Denki was sitting at the table. Why was Denki sitting at the table?! Was he angry with him? Had he somehow figured out that it was Izuku’s fault that Kohaku was dead and he was here to tell him that they weren’t friends anymore? How was Izuku supposed to deal with losing his hero friends and his civilian friends on the same day?! It wasn’t fair!

“Hey sleeping beauty!” Denki grinned, bouncing over to him and pulling on his arm to lead him to the table. “Your mom invited me over for dinner! She’s the best!”

“...Mom?” Izuku looked between her and Denki in confusion. “You invited him? How did you even get his number?”

“That’s not important!” Mom said hurriedly. “What’s important is that dinner’s ready and I made enough for two growing boys, so you both better eat up, do you hear me?”

“Sure thing Midoriya-san!”

“...ok.”

Izuku didn’t speak much as they ate, mostly letting Denki and Mom

get to know each other. They got along well, which would be great if Izuku was sure that Kaminari wasn't here to abandon him. He didn't *seem* mad, which probably just meant that he didn't know, which was...wasn't that better? At least it meant that Izuku wasn't going to lose his only friend.

Not that he was sure he deserved a friend, but he couldn't just tell Denki everything! Even though it felt like a betrayal and he hated the fact that he had to trick his friend into liking him, admitting that he was at least partially at fault for Kohaku's death would mean coming clean about everything, including his vigilantism and he just couldn't put Denki in danger like that. Maybe once he got in UA and was actually on his way to becoming a hero...but even with how much they'd trained Denki's quirk and his combat skills, he was still a civilian and he hadn't signed up for whatever powerful enemies Izuku had somehow attracted by sticking his nose where it didn't belong. Izuku could live with lying to his friend if it meant that no one else got hurt.

Or maybe Denki just didn't want to end their friendship in front of his Mom.

Soon enough, dinner was over and Izuku started gathering up everyone's dishes, if only to have something to do so he didn't have to talk. Denki would probably be leaving soon, which meant that Izuku would finally be able to retreat back into his room and stop trying to hide how guilty he felt.

"Oh Izuku, don't worry about the dishes! I'll do them." Mom said, grabbing the stack of plates from him before he had a chance to protest. "Why don't you show Kaminari your room, since it's his first time here?"

"Yeah man!" Denki grinned and gave him a thumbs up. "I mean, you've already seen mine!"

Izuku tried to calm his breathing as he looked between the two of them and nodded slowly, "...Ok."

Izuku couldn't stop his mind from racing as he led Denki down the hall. This was it. Denki was probably too polite to end their friendship in front of his mom, so this was just a ploy to get him alone and once they were in the privacy of his room, Denki would drop the bomb. Izuku shut the door behind them and braced himself for the inevitable.

It never came.

“Whoa! You’ve got so many different heroes in here!” Denki’s smile didn’t fade at all as his eyes roamed over the posters and figurines filling Izuku’s room. “I mean, don’t most people keep to All Might and the top 10?”

Izuku shrugged hesitantly, “Um, yeah, I guess? I used to have a lot more All Might in here but uh…I wanted to give space to some of underappreciated heroes? Yeah! Um, because All Might can’t be everywhere and a lot of the heroes do a lot of work to keep everyone safe, even if they’re not really in the rankings.”

“Cool!” Kaminari looked at one of the posters that Izuku had behind his bed. “Amplifier? I think I heard of her once. She’s that announcer hero, right?”

Izuku nodded frantically, “That’s how most people know about her, because she volunteers at a lot of hero events because of her quirk, but she’s actually a really effective nighttime hero! She stops a lot of crimes near the bar district and keeps everyone safe!”

Denki gestured to Izuku’s hoodie, “And Eraserhead? Is he a hero too?”

Izuku’s smile faded slightly, “Um, yeah. I…he’s one of my favorites.”

And yet Izuku had disappointed him. Again. Eraserhead had looked so hopeful when he’d brought up that vigilante rehabilitation program, and Izuku had hated that he’d had to crush that, but then again, he wouldn’t have even made the offer if he’d known that Izuku was quirkless, so he didn’t feel too guilty.

At least, not about that.

There was a beat of silence as Denki continued looking at his collection and Izuku took a deep breath before hesitating. He knew he couldn’t tell Denki about the whole vigilante side of things, but was it weird to just not bring it up? Like, it was kinda a big thing, so it was weird that it hadn’t come up yet…

“Ok, um, I am so sorry, but uh, the elephant in the room is killing me.” Denki said suddenly. “So, like, how are you holding up? I mean, I know it kinda came out of nowhere and I’m sure you saw it on the news, cause your mom said you hadn’t really been yourself and stuff, you know? I’m, uh, I’m sorry, maybe you’re upset for some other reason, cause I know you didn’t know her very well, but then you

weren't answering any of my texts and I hadn't known if something happened to you too…"

Izuku curled in on himself, "I didn't wanna make you worry."

Denki ran a hand through his hair and laughed sadly, "Yeah. Sorry, I just...I guess I don't deal well with people disappearing on me, you know? It's uh, kinda an adhd thing. I know you probably don't but when you kept ignoring my calls, my brain just kept looping that you hated me for some reason. I know it probably sounds really mean, but I was almost relieved when your mom called and said you were just depressed. That's...I'm sorry, that sounds really selfish, just forget I said that. Maybe I should start over..."

"I'm sorry." Izuku tugged at the sleeves of his hoodie again. "I didn't want to...I didn't mean...I just, I knew how close you were to her and...I…"

Before he could give anything even resembling a good explanation, Izuku found himself pulled into a tight hug. "I just didn't want to lose you too."

Izuku felt terrible. He hadn't meant to make Denki think he hated him! In fact, he'd been too busy being convinced that Denki would hate him to even consider that he might be worrying about the same thing. He swallowed and leaned back slightly, putting his hands on Denki's shoulders so they were looking eye to eye.

"I'm not going to leave you." Izuku promised. "You...Denki, you're probably the only friend I've really had. I mean, I know you're the only friend I've had since I was diagnosed quirkless. I don't want to lose you either."

And he meant it. He still wasn't convinced that the world wouldn't be better off if he'd just taken a swan dive all those months ago, but...if he had, he would have missed out on a wonderful friendship with Denki, who might still be trying to fry his brain as he figured out the best uses for his electricity. He couldn't abandon the only person except for his mom who had stayed by him even after learning he was quirkless.

He had to stay alive.

"I'm not gonna leave you." Izuku muttered, pulling Kaminari back into the hug as they both started crying. "I'm not gonna leave you, I promise."

Ogawa waved to Bakugo cheerfully as he got on the train and laughed as Bakugo, predictably, flipped him off in return. The kid was gonna be a great hero someday. Honestly, he hadn't been sure at the beginning if Bakugo would be able to pull it off, but the kid seemed to attack every obstacle in his way like it was an enemy that he could kill and he was fighting for his life. It was refreshing.

The sun was already setting as Ogawa made his own way home. His sister was probably out doing god knew what, so he was looking forward to a nice tv dinner and maybe some tv before bed. Maybe he should look for some jobs tomorrow? The redemption course was almost over, so it wouldn't hurt to know what was available for when his record finally got wiped. It'd give him a head start at least and he needed all the advantages he could get if he wanted to keep up with Bakugo.

He felt a weird tingle down his spine as he walked down one of the near-deserted streets leading away from the train station. It almost felt like he was being watched. Had Bakugo decided to get off the train and follow him? It seemed unlikely, but maybe their dumb little pranks were finally rubbing off on him. He was almost proud!

"Nice try *Kacchan!* " Ogawa laughed forcibly. "Come on out where I can see you!"

Instead of a groan or swearing like he'd expected, though, there was just a chip bag fluttering in the wind and a few strangers looking at him like he was crazy. Ogawa blushed and put his head down as he hurried down the street. He could have sworn someone was following him and Bakugo was the only likely culprit, but maybe he was just being paranoid? It *was* dark, but he was used to being out after dark, so it shouldn't be giving him this feeling.

Ogawa shook his head and subconsciously picked up his pace. It was probably nothing. These streets could be a little creepy at night, but it was nothing to worry about, right? He shook his head and tried to ignore the weird feeling, but kept an eye out for anything suspicious. He couldn't see anyone following him, which was one more point for him just being paranoid. He took a deep breath and shook his head again. Maybe the feeling would go away once he got close enough to his home and the streets got more familiar.

It didn't.

The last leg of his journey home would take him though a dimly lit

alley, but Ogawa still felt like he was being watched. He tried to tell himself that he was being ridiculous. He'd walked through that alley a million times! He'd even slept there a couple times when Arakune was being a bitch and locked him out! There was nothing to be scared of! That didn't stop him from taking a small knife from his pocket and gripping it tensely. Better safe than sorry, right?

He had just barely turned into the alley when he heard it and it shocked him so much that he almost stopped in his tracks. If anything, he'd been expecting footsteps, not *buzzing.* He kept walking, a little more quickly this time, but the buzzing just got louder. The faster he walked, the louder it got until he was running. He didn't care what he looked like at this point, his nerves were frayed and he was just ready to get home and lock the door.

He put on a last burst of speed as the exit to the alley came into view, only to skid to a stop as his path was blocked by a large swarm of...were those *bees?* Ogawa almost fell onto his butt, but managed to keep his balance and started running in the opposite way before stopping. What had gotten into him? It wasn't as if he was allergic to bees or anything so he should be able to just go around them. Don't bother them, they won't bother you, right?

He took a breath and stared down the swarm, but paused as he was struck by the weirdest sense of deja-vu. The whole situation felt eerily familiar, right down to the bees that seemed to be just too strange to be natural. Had...had he been here before?

He took one step forward and it was as if a rubber band had snapped. The swarm lunged forward and Ogawa swatted at the air as he ran, knife useless when his targets were even smaller than his blade. He just needed to get home. He wasn't allergic to bees. He might get a few stings, but he could do this.

He just needed to get home.

The stings weren't as painful as he expected. If anything, they felt more like needle pricks than bee stings, and he smiled as he realized this was going to be easier than he'd thought...until the world started spinning. He kept going, only focused on getting out of that goddamn alley, hardly registering when he tripped and started crawling instead. He just needed to get home...

The last thing Ogawa saw before he passed out was the swarm coagulating into the form of a person crouching beside him.

Then everything went dark.

Chapter End Notes

Memes!
X X X

Communication

Chapter Summary

Izuku tries to be better moving forward.

Chapter Notes

Art!
That one person in the back of the room
Jess-Bee
SalmonMeister
llxcnxxrb
Coppery Copper X
Steppy
Liz_Cygibi_386
Sleepybean
Minuete
Toshi
PlasmaBitch2.0
Arbee's

Cosplay!
X

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

More Memes at End!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku felt slightly ridiculous as he clambered over the rooftops. He'd taken a week off after his somewhat disastrous last meeting with Eraserhead, because as much as he hated to admit it, Eraser had a point, at least on some level. Izuku had been using Vigilantism as a coping mechanism and not a very good one at that, and even if he couldn't be a real hero because he was quirkless, Eraserhead was right.

He couldn't keep doing things the same way he had been. Something had to change.

First of all, he couldn't abandon Denki and Mom. It still felt like a dream, but after spending over an hour crying in Denki's arms just

because Mom had noticed he was upset and invited his friend over so he wouldn't have to be alone, Izuku couldn't deny anymore that they *actually* cared about him. It was weird, but he was determined to get used to it, which meant that he couldn't keep fighting recklessly the same way he had been. He couldn't break his promise and leave them alone.

Second, he couldn't get caught by the heroes. Things were going to be a bit more difficult now that everyone would actually be trying to catch him, but Izuku didn't know what else he *could* do. It wasn't as if they would actually let him join the vigilante rehabilitation program once they knew who he was. Like he'd told Eraserhead, being a vigilante was really the only way for a quirkless deku like him to be useful, so if he was going to continue being Viridian without dying or getting caught, he was going to need to update his gear again.

Thankfully, with the UA entrance exam being just about a month away, Denki hadn't been picking up as many shifts at the hardware store, so Izuku had been able to drop by when he wasn't there and buy a few things without his friend getting suspicious. He now had a pair of noise cancelling earmuffs hanging around his neck just in case he ran into Amplifier or another sound-based hero, and an extra strength laser pointer in one of his pockets in case he ran into Eraserhead. At the last minute, he'd even picked up a screwdriver and a holding strap that he'd adjusted to wrap snugly around his arm. The heroes, for better or worse, knew where all of his weapons were and the tool belt didn't do much to hide them, so in the event that he somehow got captured, his slingshot, marbles, pipe and knife would all get taken away fairly quickly. If he wanted any chance of escaping before the heroes got him to the station and figured out he was quirkless, he needed at least one emergency weapon in his arsenal that nobody knew about, hence the screwdriver, which he could hopefully use to pry open cuffs or take the hinges off of doors. If worse came to worst, he could also always use it as a stabbing weapon, not that he ever really *would,* but still, it was only logical to have options.

Third and finally, he couldn't keep going off and investigating on his own. If he had any useful information, he needed to make sure the heroes were aware of it before he moved forward. If they could just communicate better, it should prevent anything like Kohaku's death from happening again, or at least make it very unlikely. So if Izuku thought there was any possibility of danger at all to anyone besides himself, he would give the information to the heroes and let them handle it, assisting only where necessary. He would also be extra

super careful from now on to make sure both he and the heroes knew exactly what they were walking into before they attacked.

Which was why Izuku was now walking toward one of the places he normally saw Eraserhead, a full notebook in one hand and a laser pointer hidden in the other in case he needed to escape quickly. With everything that had happened with the debut of the berserkers, Izuku wasn't sure if Eraser had had any more time to look into that lead about the symbol of evil and All for One, so he'd taken all the research he'd done on both that and on quirk transfers in general and summarized it as best he could in a way that he *hoped* Eraser and the other investigators would be able to understand. He'd had to write a few research papers for his Quirk Theory classes online, so he'd basically used that format, adjusting it to fit the information he'd gathered and included the sources so that they could look deeper in case he'd missed something, but he could only hope all of that would be enough. There was no guarantee that this All for One or someone like him was *actually* in charge of the villain factory, but it couldn't hurt to pass along what he'd learned!

Eraserhead was already there when Izuku arrived, looking out over the streets as he waited for any sign of danger. Izuku took a deep breath and shifted his feet, ready to run, but he knew that that was more than enough to alert Eraser to his presence, "Hiya, Eraser. Good news! I'm not dead yet!"

Eraser glared at him, but Izuku felt a twinge of guilt when he saw the hero's shoulders sag in relief. He mentally added him to the list of people to stay alive for. He couldn't abandon Denki, Mom, or Eraserhead. He would be better for them.

"Thanks for the heart attack, kid." Eraser grumbled. "Have you given any more thought to my offer?"

"It's not possible Eraser." Izuku smiled sadly. "Being a vigilante is about as good as I can ask for."

"Problem child…" Eraser tried.

"But I'm going to try to be better!" Izuku offered quickly, gently setting the notebook he'd compiled on the ground. "This is all the research I've done on the symbol of evil lead. I…I'll let you handle it, but um, I hope it'll be useful? Oh, and I've been kinda hoping this'll go both ways? I'll share whatever leads I get on the case and you share info with me so I don't mess up again! That way we can still work

together and keep people safe whenever you're not actively trying to arrest me!"

"We'd be able to communicate more effectively if you were in the vigilante rehabilitation program." Eraser deadpanned. "So while I appreciate the thought, it's illogical. Why don't you pick up that notebook and we can go over what you've found at the station with Detective Tsukauchi."

Izuku shook his head and got ready to run, "If I go with you, you won't let me keep helping people."

"You'll still be helping people, kid." Eraserhead reacted to Izuku's shift in body language by grabbing his capture weapon. "You'll just be doing it legally."

Izuku shrugged, "That hasn't been a problem so far."

He rolled to the side as the capture weapon shot toward him and as soon as he was on his feet, he aimed his laser pointer directly at Eraser's eyes and pressed the button. He flinched back slightly at the bright red light, which gave Izuku just enough of an opening to jump onto the next rooftop. Eraser would have to choose between giving chase and leaving a notebook with sensitive information on an unprotected roof or delaying to grab the notebook and risk Izuku getting away. It would only be logical to make the safest choice for the investigation.

Which meant that it was time for Izuku to disappear and go find another crime to stop.

Shouta swore as he straightened from grabbing the notebook Viridian had left and tried to chase the kid, only for him to have already disappeared. The kid would make a hell of an underground hero if he'd just stop being so stubborn! He hadn't ever received any formal training, as far as Shouta was aware, but he was such a fast learner that he'd already become a master of stealth and evasion just from watching the way that the heroes fought. The amount of potential that kid had was almost as insane as the fact that the problem child refused to see it.

He sighed and started thumbing through the notebook. He had to admit that the kid *was* doing things fairly logically. If he wasn't willing to go into custody and actually become a legal hero, increasing communication with his allies was the next best thing to make sure

everyone stayed safe, so Shouta could begrudgingly admit that the kid was trying. It was better than him disappearing for weeks on end or avoiding heroes entirely at least.

He'd pushed the symbol of evil lead to the back of his mind, since his major concern at the moment were the berserkers and figuring out ways to stop them, but the kid had taken a throwaway legend he'd mentioned and dug not only into the word of mouth surrounding it, but the quirk theory. He'd handed in the equivalent of a research essay that Shouta would have been strongly tempted to use as an example paper for his third years if it wasn't dealing with such a sensitive subject. The problem child had even correctly cited all his sources!

Shouta grew more and more tense as he continued scanning through the notebook. It seemed so impossible for quirks to be stolen, but the kid's research laid it out like the only logical conclusion. The long-term effects the kid had listed out in past cases where All for One was suspected to be involved were eerily similar to what the doctors had observed in the Berserkers, which didn't bode well for anyone. Who knew, maybe the kid was completely off and they were dealing with something else entirely, but Shouta wasn't betting on it.

By the time he'd finished the whole notebook, Shouta couldn't do anything except tuck it away into his capture weapon and hurry to the station to bring it to Tsukauchi. He texted Nedzu to meet him there, since the rat would be able to point out any holes in the problem child's research, but as he ran over the rooftops, Shouta couldn't stop Viridian's final paragraphs from playing on loop in his head.

At the current point in the investigation, there is no way of knowing if the villain known as All for One is behind the Villain Factory and their experiments with Trigger, but it can be logically inferred that the true masterminds are, at the very least, inspired by those stories and have the experience and connections in the underground to be able to import the drugs from other countries, which excludes any small or start-up operations.The person or persons behind the entity known as the Villain Factory are well connected and well educated enough to know that quirk transfer is theoretically possible and have the confidence in their abilities to try to make it a reality.

Considering that the villains known as Berserkers show the same symptoms and side effects seen in other suspected quirk transfers (i.e. brain damage in previously quirkless individuals that later manifested quirks), I strongly suspect that the Villain factory has access to at least one quirk that enables

quirk transfer. It is my opinion that the Berserkers are not the final stage of experimentation, but that the masterminds behind the operation are attempting to create a permanently stronger quirk without the brain damage side-effect present in the Berserkers. If they succeed in that goal, it is likely that they will attempt to create an enhanced individual with multiple quirks.

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

Next Update: 2.12.2021

Past

Chapter Summary

A little more about All for One

Chapter Notes

Art!
Claire;P X X
Imagination

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Why hello Aizawa!” Nedzu chirped cheerfully. He was already waiting with Tsukauchi in a backroom at the police station when Shouta arrived, a steaming cup of tea in his paws as two more cups sat ready at the table. Shouta wanted to be surprised that the rat had beat him there, but the more he thought about it, of course the rat would be bright eyed and bushy tailed with curiosity after receiving an appropriately cryptic text in the middle of the night. He thrived off of investigation and chaos.

“I, for one, would like to know why you sicced Nedzu on me in the middle of the night.” Tsukauchi groaned tiredly. “Not that I don’t appreciate the tea, but some warning would have been nice.”

Shouta, thoroughly annoyed, pulled the notebook Viridian had given him from his capture weapon and slammed it on the table, “Explain. Now.”

Tsukauchi looked at the notebook like it could explode at any moment, as if Shouta would stoop that low just because he was angry. It was kind of insulting. He would be much more creative.

Tsukauchi glanced between the book and Aizawa a few times, “I’m sorry Eraser, I’m confused. What is this?”

“That.” Shouta jammed a finger at the notebook cover. “Is a full investigation into a lead that *you* told me was a dead end. The symbol of evil? Ring a bell? It might sound a little familiar from the only interrogation we managed to get with a Berserker before he

disappeared from police custody!!! ”

Tsukauchi’s face hardened, “I already told you, the Symbol of Evil is dead. I already confirmed it with the last hero that fought him. There’s no way he could have survived.”

Shouta glared at him, “Then would you care to explain why our Berserkers show the exact same symptoms as All for One’s previous victims?!”

There was a loud moment of silence as Shouta glared at Tsukauchi and Nedzu’s shocked faces, then Tsukauchi was grabbing the notebook, frantically flipping through it as he tried to prove Shouta wrong.

“There’s sources in there too.” Shouta pointed out. “Just in case you’re still stubbornly insisting on keeping your eyes screwed shut.”

Nedzu had stood to look over Tsukauchi’s shoulder as he read, “Where did you get this?”

Shouta sighed and rubbed the bridge of his nose, “Viridian.”

Tsukauchi looked up at him in shock, “I thought you were going to try to arrest him.”

Shouta raised one eyebrow skeptically, “The kid’s smart enough to write *that* and you think he’s not gonna think of a way around my fighting style. He hit me with a laser pointer.”

Tsukauchi at least had the good graces to hide his chuckles. Nedzu didn’t, but Shouta hadn’t expected him to. A few minutes passed with no sounds except for the flipping of pages and the occasional shuffle as Nedzu’s whiskers twitched in excitement or whatever that rat was feeling at the moment.

Finally, the two of them reached the end of the notebook and Nedzu took it from Tsukauchi and shut it with a snap, “Well, that *is* concerning.”

“So there’s not any holes in his research.” Shouta didn’t phrase it as a question. He’d read though the notebook himself and the kid was nothing if not thorough. “Have you read the sources he referenced?”

“Only in passing.” Nedzu answered. “To be honest, many intellectuals are blinded by their biases, which means that topics such as quirk

transfer are often regarded as nothing more than legends and fairytales and any researchers who pursue them end up as laughing stocks within the community. All this to say that your vigilante has basically compiled every source one *can* find on the topic, and there are so many better respected discussions on the topic of quirk theory that I must admit I myself hadn't even considered quirk transfer as a possible consideration in what seemed to be an almost routine drug ring investigation."

"Well, it's not routine anymore." Shouta said. "And if All for One is as dead as you believe Tsukauchi, then that means that either the quirk has been transferred or the Villain Factory has enlisted someone else with a similar quirk. Honestly, at this point, I don't know which of those options would be worse, but you're sure he's dead?"

Tsukauchi and Nedzu shared a look before Nedzu spoke up, "With quirks such as All for One, it is difficult to have a true guarantee."

"Of course it is." Shouta grumbled. "I just want an explanation of why it fell to a *teenager* to pick up our slack and make this connection. Because knowing the Villain Factory's ultimate goal…"

"Doesn't truly change that much about how we go about our investigation." Nedzu said calmly. "We had already assumed they were going to continue their experiments. The only difference now is that we know to be prepared if villains show up manifesting multiple quirks."

"Which *is* a difference." Shouta countered. "If we're going to be dealing with monsters that are capable of wielding multiple quirks, we're going to need more heroes as backup, both combat and rescue, considering we know exactly how destructive a Berserker can be with just *one* quirk, as well as a plan of how to explain the existence of them to the media, considering that even most professional researchers dismiss this whole situation as impossible. Admit it, this lead changes things."

"Wasn't Viridian going to stop looking into this case?" Tsukauchi asked. "I thought after what happened with Queen Bee's last host he would…"

"When the kid blames himself for something, he doubles down to try to make up for his mistakes." Shouta rubbed the bridge of his nose. "It's part of what makes him such an effective vigilante."

"And why we should make his capture top priority." Nedzu declared

firmly. “This research is spectacular, and I would love to take him under my wing, but so, I expect, would All for One. Thankfully, the child seems to have taken due care while researching to make it seem as though his interest in the subject is purely academic, but All for One has proved to be a dangerous enemy for anyone to make. Considering what that villain was able to do to the symbol of peace, I am loath to think what he would do to an untrained and unprotected vigilante.”

“What he did to…?” Shouta felt a chill wash over him. “ *He’s* the reason All Might is spitting up blood and has to retire to UA?! Viridian is trying to pit himself against *that?!* ”

Ogawa groaned as he woke up. Had he fallen asleep on the floor again? Everytime he did that, he swore to himself that he would never do it again, and yet here he was. What time was it? He reached for his phone, his hands knocking almost painfully against the cold metal bars as he blindly searched for it.

Wait...bars?

His eyes flew open and Ogawa sat straight up as the memories flooded back in, only to groan again and hold his head desperately as his head started spinning.

“Yeah, those drugs they use can be a bitch.”

Ogawa whipped around and immediately regretted it as the world turned upside-down again and he started throwing up.

“Whoa, they really did a number on you, huh? They don’t usually give ‘em that much, but you were probably all hyped up on adrenaline trying to escape, huh? It’s alright, just let it out.”

After what felt like a few minutes hurling up his guts, a feeling he hadn’t missed from his days of going to wild parties, Ogawa finally drew in a shaky breath and was able to actually look at the person who had just spent the last few minutes softly giving him encouragement and waiting for him to finish throwing up.

He didn’t know if he could really call the guy his *cellmate* considering that they were technically separated by a wall of bars, but he was definitely a prisoner and he’d been there a while if the thick layer of dirt on his skin and the rags that passed for his clothes were any indication. In fact, the only part of him that could be called clean was

his stark-white hair, but considering that it seemed to be made more of a vapor than anything solid, Ogawa guessed it didn't hold dirt like normal hair did.

"Hey!" The guy gave him a crooked smile. "Feeling any better?"

Ogawa chose not to answer that question, "Where are we?"

His cellmate shrugged, "No idea. Somewhere in Japan, I think, since most of who they've brought in speak japanese. I don't like it when they bring in tourists. It seems like it's always a lot worse for them, since there's no way of explaining things to them."

Ogawa tried to ignore the dread pooling in his stomach, "What things are you having to explain? What are they going to do to us?"

His cellmate shrugged, "I don't know exactly. That's mostly up to the Doctor and Sensei. I'm sure you've heard a lot of fun possibilities from your time in the other cells."

Ogawa looked at him suspiciously, "Other cells? I just got here."

The guy's eyes widened in shock, "You didn't go through the other cells?"

Ogawa shook his head and his cellmate looked conflicted, "They must have something in mind for you already, then. It's probably why they took you, actually. I mean, lucky you! Most of the time when the doctor doesn't know what to use you for, you'll have to stay in the cells for longer, so, uh, at least you'll get out sooner!"

"But I'll also go through whatever hell the doctor has planned for me sooner." Ogawa said numbly.

"Yeah…" His cellmate winced. "This, uh, this is kinda the last stop before...you know…"

He thought he was starting to understand, yeah, "Cool, so...uh, you're here too, so does that mean you're almost out?"

The guy laughed awkwardly and rubbed the back of his neck, "Unfortunately, no. I, uh, I think Sensei just likes torturing me for some reason. See, I've been really friendly for as long as I can remember, so even though I've been here longer than pretty much anyone else, as far as I know, they leave me here so I can befriend everyone right before they're ripped away from me forever." He

laughed bitterly. “You’d think I’d’ve learned my lesson by now, right?”

“Nothing wrong with being friendly, I guess.” Ogawa tried to be comforting, but in the current context, the platitude just felt like ash on his tongue. “Uh, my name’s Ogawa, by the way. What’s yours?”

To his surprise, his cellmate shrugged, “I dunno. You know how I said I’ve been friendly for as long as I can remember? Well, uh, I actually can’t...For me, uh, this cell is basically it. It’s all I’ve ever known.”

“Oh…” Ogawa wasn’t quite sure how to respond to that. Was there an appropriate response to learning that the person you were talking to had basically grown up in a cell awaiting human experimentation. Somehow he didn’t think Hallmark made a card for that.

“Most of the people who pass through call me Kumo, though!” He said cheerfully. “It’s uh, cause my hair kinda looks like a cloud, so...yeah.”

“Cool…” Ogawa nodded politely. “It, uh, it suits you?”

Kumo laughed loudly, “Thanks! I’d like to think I liked my real name just as much, right?”

“Yeah.” Ogawa chuckled. “Or who knows, maybe you hated the last one and and Kumo’s an improvement.”

“I hope not.” Kumo said seriously. “I would hate to think that *this* was an improvement over anything.”

“Oh, right, um, sorry.” Ogawa looked at the floor. Why had he even joked about that? It was obviously a sensitive subject. He couldn’t even imagine what it would be like if he suddenly just...couldn’t remember anything before his abduction.

“Sorry, I didn’t mean to bring down the mood.” Kumo shrugged. “I uh, I’m used to it by now.”

“Have you ever thought about getting out?” Ogawa asked. “Escaping? Finding out who you used to be?”

If he could convince Kumo to help him, the two of them would have a much better chance of escaping than either of them would alone, right? Obviously, it would be better to wait a bit and figure out what the defenses were, but from what Kumo said, Ogawa didn’t think he had that kind of time.

“I’m pretty sure that’s why they wiped me.” Kumo smiled sadly. “At least, I’d like to think I tried escaping so many times and made myself such a pain in the ass that they had to make me forget what I was trying to get back to.”

“But you’ve still got your quirk!” Ogawa pointed out. “I mean, it might be kinda illegal, but honestly wouldn’t prison be better than here?”

“It *would* be and believe me, I would use my quirk to escape in a heartbeat,” Kumo explained, “...if I could remember how to use it.”

Ogawa gasped, “They…?”

“Wipe me every time I figure out how it works. Yeah.” Kumo gave a wry smile. “Or at least I’m pretty sure they do. It’s part of why it’s so hard to tell how long I’ve been here. They could have wiped me yesterday and I just...wouldn’t know.”

Ogawa huffed, “That sucks.”

“Yep.” Kumo leaned against the bars separating their cells in a way that was probably somewhat close to comfortable. “So Ogawa, why don’t you tell me about the outside world. I’ve been pretty curious about these animals...I think they’re called cats?”

Chapter End Notes

Next update: 2.14.2021

Harmony

Chapter Summary

The calm before...well, you know the rest.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Claire;P
Peachypie
Hubris, Spite, and [redacted] X
Eridanus

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku grunted as Denki threw him to the ground for the third time in a row., “Oof, good job Denki! You’re gonna be able to handle whatever UA throws at you.”

Denki rolled his eyes, “Admit it, you’re going easy on me.”

“I have no idea what you mean.” Izuku said innocently, then laughed. “But seriously, I’m really not! You’ve gotten really good at controlling your power output so that it temporarily paralyzes the muscles of your opponent so they can’t fight back while you pin them. I could always counter you by wearing rubber soled shoes and making sure that no other part of my body ever comes into contact with literally anything else, but I’d only be able to do that if I knew I was going to be fighting an electric quirk *and* was physically stronger than you.”

“Which you are.” Denki pointed out.

Izuku shrugged, “Maybe a little, but you’ve been getting a lot stronger!”

Denki sighed and collapsed on the grass, “You really think I’ve got a chance at UA?”

“I think they’d be crazy not to take you.” Izuku said confidently. “You’re a good fighter, you’re practically an amateur electrician at this point, and you’re going to be a great hero.”

“I think you’re going to have to keep hyping me up all the way until the entrance exam.” Denki said wryly. “I still don’t understand why you’re not applying.”

“I’m quirkless.” Izuku shrugged. “There’s only 40 spots in the hero course and there’s no way I can compete with hundreds of other kids with super powerful quirks and I don’t want to take one of those spots agway from someone who deserves it. The only way I’d get into UA would be in the general education course and if it comes down to that, I’m better off staying online.”

“I guess you’re right…” Denki frowned. “I still think you could beat me, though.”

“It’s alright.” Izuku said. “The world doesn’t need me as a hero.”

Denki groaned and stood up, “Ready to go another round?”

Izuku grinned, “Always!”

Katsuki glared at Akiko as she shoved his shoulder again, “Knock it off, Pigtails. I’m trying to be a better person and that doesn’t include beating you up!”

“Come on, Kacchan!” She grinned. “We wouldn’t be doing our job if we didn’t annoy you every once and a while! Now come on! Read us your list!”

“I said fuck off!”

To his chagrin, the stupid nickname that Stain had spread had ended up sticking. Well, Akiko and Maki had started calling him that to piss him off and Dabi absolutely refused to call him anything else, probably for the same reason. At first, he’d thought that’d be the extent of his torture, but no. Apparently Dabi hadn’t wasted any time in telling practically all of his info broker contacts that Katsuki was the *Kacchan* that Stain kept going on about. It had opened a lot of doors and meant he’d made a lot of connections that might have taken years to make otherwise, but that didn’t mean he had to be happy that half the new people he met only knew him by some cutesy nickname.

“Now, now, Akiko, Bakugo doesn’t have to share his list if he doesn’t want to.” Amplifier came up and laid a hand on Akiko’s shoulder. “Listing the things you’ve improved on can be intensely personal.”

“Exactly.” Maki said. “There’s no shame in being shy, Kacchan.”

“I’m not fucking shy!” Katsuki yelled, blushing. “Fine! I’ll share my stupid list if it’ll shut you extras up.”

“Cross my heart and hope to die.” Akiko smirked. She always got so smug when she got her way.

“So, no Ogawa today?” Amplifier asked curiously.

Akiko shrugged, “Guess not. He’s got perfect attendance though, so he’s fine to miss one lesson.”

“Oh, yeah.” Amplifier waved her hand dismissively. “He’d basically have to miss the rest of the course to fail out, I’m not worried about that. I was just curious if he was sick or something.”

“Not that I know of.” Maki shrugged. “Probably just got busy, but we’re hanging out tomorrow, so we’ll be sure to tell him you said hi.”

It *was* weird that Ogawa hadn’t shown up yet, but Katsuki understood. Stuff happened and he’d been hanging around the underground enough to know that when someone lived in that grey area the way they did, sometimes shit happened without warning. Well, that was just part of being human, but it seemed to happen even more often to people in the underground than it did to just average joes. The weirdest part of it all was that he still hadn’t texted them. Normally if he couldn’t make it to one of their hangouts, he’d at least shoot them a message, but so far Katsuki hadn’t received anything. Whatever, he’d give the guy a hard time for leaving them on read when he saw him tomorrow.

“Now, I think Kacchan here was about to share something with the class?” Akiko leaned over the back of her chair. “So, tell us kiddo, what are you most proud of?”

Now that they only had a few weeks left in the redemption course, Amplifier was having them look back on their progress and point out how they’d changed and come closer to who they wanted to be. Katsuki wasn’t quite sure he was any more worthy of being a hero than he had been when he started this whole thing, but…

“I’m not a bully anymore.” He said finally. “That’s obviously the first thing on my list. I don’t beat kids up just for fun anymore and I step in when I see other people doing it. My school is still a piece of shit, but once I get into UA, I’m outta there and I never have to see those

stupid villains again."

"Woohoo!" Akiko applauded and Maki slapped him on the back. Katsuki rolled his eyes, but almost smiled, not that he wouldn't yell at anyone who tried pointing that out.

"You're doing really well, kid." Maki said proudly. "I think that, out of all us, you've probably made the most progress."

"Don't sell yourselves short." Katsuki grumbled. "At least Pigtails finally blocked her deadbeat ex's number."

"Hey!" Akiko yelled indignantly. "I told you that in confidence!"

"So what?" Katsuki smirked back at her as Maki laughed.

Yeah, he may not be where he needed to be yet, but he'd learned he didn't need to be perfect to be on the right path. He'd have to work hard at UA to make sure he became the kind of hero Izuku could look up to, but he'd do it.

He was the strongest he'd ever been.

All for One was content.

For once, things were going exactly to plan. Queen Bee was adjusting well to her new host and was on track to pass the UA entrance exam with flying colors. He had all the quirks he needed to create a prototype of his masterpiece and, if the experiment went as well as the doctor assured him that it would, Tomura would have his perfect assistant by the time classes began at UA. Rumors were already beginning to circulate that All Might would be taking a teaching position at the school, right along Eraserhead and Present Mic, so everything was coming together perfectly!

He simply needed to ensure that it stayed that way.

There was nothing that All for One delighted in more, however, than using his enemy's own tricks against them so they knew exactly how powerless they were against him. If a troublesome vigilante insisted on playing a kazoo in the middle of his symphony and creating a distraction, then he would simply have to create a louder one! He would put a set of bagpipes out in the lobby, making sure to play just loud enough to distract the troublemakers from what was happening onstage, all while the main symphony continued unimpeded. With

how close his plans were to creating perfect harmony, however, the distraction would need to be *significant,* just to ensure that everything ran as smoothly as he intended. All for One wasn't concerned, though, he'd already almost killed the number one hero.

The number two would be child's play.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 2.16.2021

Distraction

Chapter Summary

All for One puts his most recent plan into play.

Chapter Notes

Art!
EmEm
g-asaky
netsputnik1
greenie Coppery Copper X
buzzbuzz

Memes!
X X X

bill and if All for One really was the one behind the experiments, he might have the power and connections to explain how the number two hero had managed to vanish off the face of the earth. They obviously weren't *hoping* for that, considering that Endeavor was enough of a loose cannon without whatever modifications those monsters did to turn their victims into Berserkers, but it was something they were going to need to prepare for in case it happened.

Shouta left the station and hit the rooftops. He knew it wasn't *likely* that he would be able to find a critical lead in the case tonight, but the sooner they closed down the villain factory, the better. The hero commission and Endeavor's agency were both working overtime to keep Endeavor's disappearance from the media, but Shouta knew they'd only be able to manage that for so long. People were already starting to notice that Endeavor hadn't made any public appearances and were beginning to speculate as to why, so Shouta gave it until the end of the week, at the latest, until the vultures managed to sink their claws into the whole story.

That was gonna be fun.

He heard a scuffle a few alleys over and made his way there, jumping down when he saw Viridian fighting two villains while the victim cowered in the corner. They weren't very skilled, and Shouta knew that the kid really wouldn't have any trouble taking them down by himself, but he still didn't waste any time dispatching the thug that was trying to sneak up on the kid, then quietly went after the other. If he could get rid of both villains before Viridian realized he was there, then he might just have a chance to grab him and take him in before the kid ran away again.

He was already moving to attack the second villain when Viridan brought both of his pipes down on the guy's head and knocked him out. Years as a pro-hero had taught Shouta to roll with the punches, though, so he simply shifted his momentum into going after the kid instead. For half a second, he thought he would actually succeed in catching him, but Viridian's eyes widened and at the last moment, he managed to roll away, grabbing his slingshot and letting a marble loose right at Shouta's chest. He used his capture weapon to stop it, but when he'd recovered, the kid was already halfway up the wall.

"Nice try, Eraser!" The kid gave him a bright smile as he leaned over the fire escape. "Um...can you make sure the police get those guys?"

Shotua grunted and activated his comm to let the police department

know he had criminals ready for pickup, “You can least help tie the villains up before throwing in the towel, problem child.”

“I…I’m not…!” The kid’s cheeks puffed out indignantly. “I’m not throwing in the towel, Eraserhead, I’m trying not to get arrested!”

“Same difference.” Shouta responded cheekily, leaning down to zip tie the villains’ wrists together. He could still feel the kid watching him, so he wasn’t as rushed as he could have been as he turned to the victim, “The police will be here in a few minutes and these villains aren't going anywhere. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I have a vigilante to catch.”

He smiled as Viridian squawked above him and scrambled to get onto the rooftops, Shouta following quickly behind after receiving a confused nod from the victim.

“No fair!” Viridian called over his shoulder. “Who’s throwing in the towel now?!”

“Still you, kid.” Shouta responded. “We’re offering you a shot at being a real hero, just quit running and let us help you!”

“I told you, I can’t be a hero!” Viridian yelled back. “But I’m not trying to die anymore, so pick your battles!”

The easy admission made Shouta stop in his tracks, and Viridian glanced behind him and stumbled to a confused stop as he realized Shouta was no longer chasing him. Illogical problem child. He should have been using this chance to get away.

“Um…” Viridian looked at him nervously. “Did I say something wrong?”

Shouta blinked a few times as his brain finally caught up, “No, kid, not at all. It, um...I’m happy for you. Congratulations?”

Viridian shuffled nervously in place, his voice getting quieter as he retreated back into his shell, “I, uh, I know it seems kinda sudden, but um...there are a couple people I can’t leave, you know? So, uh, I’m gonna be better!”

Maybe this was his chance to finally get through to the kid and convince him to let them take him into custody, “Problem Child…”

“I’m not gonna stop being a vigilante.” Viridian cut him off quickly. “I

still want to help people and I'm not going to give that up, but uh...I'll try to stop being so reckless and I'm trying to communicate better! Was, uh, did the notebook I gave you end up being useful?"

Shouta sighed, "If I say yes, are you gonna keep digging into things you're not supposed to?"

Viridian smiled sheepishly, "I'll probably do that anyway."

Shouta glared at him, but the problem child simply gave him a shit-eating grin and he couldn't help being grateful. With how distraught the kid had been recently, it was nice to see him in a good mood.

"In the spirit of better communication..." Shouta said finally, looking around. Thankfully he couldn't see or sense any other presences, so they would be fine to discuss the case, at least for now. "There's something that we're keeping out of the media for now, but we think the villain factory might be behind it. Since you refuse to keep your nose out of the case, you should probably be prepared."

"Alright?" Viridian looked confused and stepped a little closer. "What is it?"

Shouta glanced around again. The kid knew a lot about heroes, so it would be better to bank on that so he could keep it vague, just in case anyone *was* listening, "No one's seen Enji Todoroki in a few days."

"Enji Todor…" Viridian's eyes widened. "You mean En…"

Shouta cut him off with a glare and the kid slammed his mouth shut as he fully processed how bad it would be if and when that information got out.

"Oh." The kid breathed. "And you think it's linked to trigger?"

Shotua shrugged, "He's got a strong quirk and the family didn't have anything to do with it. You have to admit it's likely."

"But why…?" The kid started muttering and Shouta could tell he was gonna lose him into theorizing if he didn't say something soon. "It seems so risky, they've been operating in the shadows, but this'll…"

"Kid." Shouta interrupted. "You realize that most of the reason I'm telling you this is because if he... *shows up different,* I want you to promise to run in the opposite direction. You said you're gonna be less reckless? Well, let's put that resolution to the test."

“I would never!” Viridian waved his hands frantically to emphasize the denial. “I know I would lose that fight, no question! I’m pretty sure the only reason I’d ever fight him, especially if the villain factory got their hands on him, would be if he came after me directly but I’m just a minor vigilante, so that’s not gonna happen.”

“Alright.” Shouta siad skeptically. “Just remember you promised.”

“I won’t forget.” Viridian said seriously, then the problem child grinned, “See ya later Eraserhead!”

Shouta activated his quirk and grabbed his capture weapon, but the kid was already hopping onto the next rooftop, “Get back here kid!”

To his surprise, Viridian actually laughed as he ran away.

The third glass in a row melted in Dabi’s hand as he tried to polish it and he would have thrown the buffing rag onto the counter in frustration if it hadn’t already burned into ash. He knew that he hadn’t been meant to overhear the conversation, but he’d just been trying to cool down after a long evening working a hot bar, keeping to the rooftops to avoid the inevitable stares and fear that came when normal people saw his scars. And, of course, as someone who had a sidegig as an info broker, seeing a vigilante and hero having a civil conversation had been enough to ignite his curiosity, but he almost wished he’d just gone back to the bar immediately.

No one’s seen Enji Todoroki in a few days.

Most civilians wouldn’t know the name, even though it was public record, because most people just didn’t care. It was a lot more fun to cheer for *Endeavor,* after all . Dabi, however, knew the name a little too well. How could a kid ever forget his own old man, right?

How such a big story was being kept out of the media was a miracle in and of itself, but Dabi wasn’t going to be the one that broke it. No, he was more concerned about finding whoever had dared to kidnap his father when *he* was supposed to be the one to kill him.

Eraserhead and Viridan hadn’t dropped a whole lot of hints during their conversation, just something about a group called the *villain factory* and that they had connections to trigger, but it would have to be enough because Dabi wasn’t about to let a bunch of nobodies steal his revenge out from under him. And if he had to stop this *villain factory* himself, then so be it.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 2.18.2021

Investigation

Chapter Summary

Information comes to light.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Slumberingweald
Tasty Booger
Another Obsessed Person
Tsukauchi Naomasa is my husband
Hubris, Blood, and [redacted]
I'm totally a bee
Immortal Koolaid Ruler Eren

Memes at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki slouched up the stairs and knocked on the door as hard as he could, “Ogawa, you tentacle-haired bastard, you better be in there!”

He might be getting better at this whole *emotion* thing, but worry still felt a hell of a lot like anger and Katsuki was ready to punch his friend’s face in as soon as he opened the door.

Except for the fact that he didn’t.

Instead, the door was opened by a woman who looked to be a few years older than Ogawa was, with long locks of grey hair that almost looked like dusty cobwebs, “What do you think you’re doing, brat?”

Katsuki looked her up and down. He knew he didn’t have the address wrong, but Ogawa had mentioned that he lived with his deadbeat sister, so this must be her, “I’m looking for your stupid brother, not you. Is he home?”

“Can’t you just text him like a normal person rather than showing up and pounding on my door in the middle of my nap?” She challenged.

“You don’t think I already tried that, dumbass?” Katsuki growled. “He’s not answering, so why don’t you go pull him out of his room so I can give him a piece of my mind.”

The sister, Arakune if Katsuki remembered correctly, huffed, “Even if I was willing to do that, brat, he’s not here.”

Katsuki felt his stomach drop slightly, “Well then, where the fuck is he?”

Arakune shrugged, “Hell if I know. Haven’t seen him in almost a week. He’s probably out on a bender or something.”

“So let me get this straight.” Katsuki said quietly. “Your brother has been missing for a week and *you don’t even care?!”*

“Do I look like I care about what that brat does?” She rolled her eyes. “Go ask his friends or whatever and get off my porch before I *make you.”*

Katsuki growled quietly as she slammed the door in his face. He had half a mind to blow it down and force her to talk to him, but it didn’t seem like she had a lot of information anyway, so instead he turned on his heel and stalked down the street. Where could Ogawa have gone? It just wasn’t like him to disappear like this, not that Katsuki had really known him that long, but still...Whatever, he should probably file a missing person’s report or something since the idiot’s sister obviously didn’t care enough to do it.

Katsuki stopped walking as the thought processed. Ogawa was missing. No one knew where he was. He wasn’t at home sick like he and the others had assumed. He...something might have happened to him. He could be in danger!

The realization made Katsuki sick and it seemed like almost no time at all until he was kicking open the door to the police station. The cat-headed officer he’d seen on his last visit was sitting at the desk again, so Katsuki went right up to him, “Hey furball, is Amplifier here?”

The officer visibly bristled, his fur standing up on end and Katsuki wondered if he should apologize. Probably, but right now he was too worried to do anything but find Amplifier so he could get her to find Ogawa.

“She’s not here right now.” A plain looking detective said kindly, walking up to the desk.

Katsuki paused for a moment, “What about Eraserhead? Is he around?”

“It’s the same issue.” The detective pointed out. “They’re both active at night, so they won’t be on duty for another few hours. But maybe we can still help? I’m Detective Tsukauchi, it’s nice to meet you.”

Katsuki eyed him suspiciously, then huffed, “Katsuki Bakugo.”

He remembered Amplifier mentioning a *Tsuki* at the police station a couple times, so this must be him. Whatever. He’d have to be good enough.

“Well, Bakugo,” the detective smiled kindly and gestured for Katsuki to follow him back to his desk, “what can I help you with?”

“One of the guys from Amplifier’s redemption groups is missing.” Katsuki growled. “And you better do your job and find him.”

Tsukauchi blinked a couple times and sat down at his computer, “Name? Maybe there’s already a case open.”

“Ogawa.” Bakugo wracked his brain. What was the guy’s first name again? “Aito Ogawa. He has a tentacle hair quirk.”

Tsukauchi typed a few things into his computer and frowned, “Alright, he doesn't have a report open yet. What makes you so sure he’s missing?”

“He hasn’t shown up to group or to the hangouts we planned.” Katuski said. “He’s also not answering his stupid phone.”

“Ok…” The detective typed a few things. “Have you checked at his home? Maybe his phone broke or something like that?”

“Where do you think I just came from?” Katsuki growled. “He lives with his good-for-nothing sister, but she hasn’t seen him either and apparently doesn’t care.”

Tsukauchi asked him a few more questions, going over basic information such as when he last saw him and who else might have any information on his whereabouts and it was less than twenty minutes later that Katsuki was leaving the station and heading home. He wished he felt lighter or relieved or whatever, but he was just tired. Now that he’d done all he could, the anger that had been covering everything was slowly leaking out of him and Katsuki just felt tired.

Ogawa better be ok, because if he wasn’t, Katsuki was gonna kill him.

“You should drink some water.”

Ogawa glared at Kumo through the bars, then went back to covering his eyes with his arm, “Somehow, I don’t think that’s gonna help.”

His entire body felt like it was being torn apart from the inside. He’d only had a few sessions with the doctor so far, but every visit to the lab seemed worse than the last, which didn’t bode well for anything going forward. The doctor, who Ogawa was 100% convinced was completely off his rocker, rambled proudly during their experiments about how his body was *taking the modifications well* , whatever that meant, and *would soon be ready for the other quirks,* which was both impossible and terrifying. All he knew was that after the experiments, he would wake up back in his cell hours or even days later, depending on how long whatever drugs they’d used on him that time took to wear off. It was exhausting.

“Did you see that other guy again today? The big one?” Kumo asked. “Do you know why they’re not bringing him to the cells at all?”

He groaned and rolled onto his side so he could see his cellmate, “The doctor said something about him being expendable? I don’t know, but I think they’re rushing the process with him or something.”

The other guy had only been in the lab for Ogawa’s last two sessions and at first he could have sworn he was Endeavor, but finally decided it must just be some lookalike. He’d asked Kumo if he’d seen him before, but he was just as confused as he was. They couldn’t really afford to offer the mystery experiment any more than passing curiosity, however, considering that they had to focus on staying alive and maybe even finding a way out of there if they could. In a place like this, it was unfortunately every man for himself.

“I wonder what they’re gonna use him for.” Kumo spoke with a detachment that only came from being in this place way too long. “They never tell me. The ones they finish with just disappear.”

“Well that’s comforting.” Ogawa deadpanned. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’m gonna take another nap.”

Izuku had spent the past few days obsessively looking up everything he could about Endeavor. It wasn’t as if he didn’t already have more than a passing knowledge, he couldn’t have been able to call himself a hero fanboy if he didn’t know a lot of trivia on every one of the top

ten heroes, but Endeavor had never particularly been one of his favorites. He'd been too focused on All Might to really pay Endeavor much mind, but there was no lack of information out there once he went digging.

The first surprise had been discovering more about his family. He had three living children and Izuku winced when he realized that his disastrous encounter at New Years had sparked a rumor that the hero was actually abusive. He hadn't wanted to cause any trouble for the family, but it seemed that's what he'd done. There was nothing that he could do about that now, however, so maybe finding him would count as a good enough apology to the family.

Mostly Izuku was looking at the hero's habits and social connections for any clue as to where he could have disappeared to in the case that he hadn't been kidnapped by the villain factory, but one section in his notebook seemed to burn in his mind even though that notebook was currently closed and hidden deep under his mattress. He hated himself for it, but he couldn't afford not to keep a list of Endeavor's weaknesses just in case it *was* the villain factory.

He'd ended up having a nightmare about it last night. He'd been back at the bar from New Years, fire racing toward him as Endeavor glared at him. For some reason he'd had his notebook in his hand, but his list hadn't been enough. The flames had just devoured the book and Izuku had woken up in a cold sweat, slapping at his blankets in a desperate attempt to put out the imaginary fire that was threatening to burn him alive.

He hadn't been able to sleep after that.

Izuku sighed as he smelled mom making breakfast. He'd spent all night researching...again. He really needed to stop doing that when he was stressed, but the thought of Endeavor coming back as a berserker, or worse, with multiple quirks, was too...he just hoped that Eraser and the detectives on the case would be able to find him before the news broke and they could avoid all of that drama and negative publicity. There wasn't even a guarantee that the villain factory had taken him, it was just a hunch anyway. Everything was going to be fine.

He stood and stretched, ready to go join Mom for breakfast when he heard a loud gasp, "Izuku! Get in here!"

Izuku panicked and tore the door of his room open, racing down the hall and almost falling as he slid into the living room, "What is it?

What's wrong?"

Mom was staring frozen at the TV, "I know you keep up with all the heroes and...what could have happened?"

Izuku wrinkled his nose in confusion and turned to the screen, his heart sinking as he saw the headlines.

"...popularity has gone down significantly since the New Years Disaster." Izuku vaguely recognized the reporter, although he couldn't tell if he recognized her from the news or if he'd saved her at some point. "Since then, many have brought up his history of violence and there have even been petitions making their way around social media sites to insist that the police investigate the family for abuse, mostly citing the institutionalization of Rei Todoroki, Endeavor's wife, in the wake of a mental breakdown nearly a decade ago, as well as the tragic death of their oldest son in a training accident. It has been widely speculated that Endeavor will lose the coveted number two spot at the next JP Billboard ranking, so it remains to be seen whether this disappearance is legitimate or if it is a ploy by his publity team to make him seem more sympathetic in an attempt to keep his current rating. What do you think? Is this a publicity ploy, a family snapping after a lifetime of abuse, or a villain at work? We'll have to see as the story unfolds! Hina Yu, signing off."

"How could the number two hero just have disappeared?" Mom sounded worried, but she didn't even know the half of it. "The police don't even have any idea where he could be!"

Well, Izuku knew that wasn't *entirely* true, but it was probably best if the media didn't know their biggest lead on the case was human experimentation. Well, actually, the vultures would probably love it, but the general public wouldn't think it was very reassuring. They really needed to figure out this case, quickly.

Izuku didn't want to have to use his list.

Chapter End Notes

> Memes!
> If some of the character names are wrong in the memes...I'm sorry, but at this point I am just along for ride in the chaos that is sometimes the discord server.
> X X X

Next Update: 2.20.2021

Broker

Chapter Summary

The search continues.

Chapter Notes

Art!
TsukauchiNaomasaismyhusband X
Drug X

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki slouched his shoulders as he pushed the door of the bar open. He knew he should leave Ogawa's case to the police. They knew what they were doing and Katsuki didn't really, but with everything going on with Endeavor, he knew that finding a minor villain wasn't going to be on the top of their list of priorities. Katsuki, however, also knew that someone had to know something. It was one of the things his friends had basically pounded into his brain when they started showing him around the underground: nothing stays secret for long and there are eyes everywhere. If he needed to know something, all he really needed to know was who to ask.

"Get outta here, kid." Katsuki didn't recognize the bartender who was standing behind the counter. "This is no place for minors."

Katsuki scowled, "Where's Dabi?"

"Asshole called in sick this morning." The bartender slammed the glass he was polishing down on the counter. "So if you see him, give him a piece of my mind."

"Sure, whatever, I'll punch his lights out or something." Katsuki rolled his eyes. "Now, where can I find him?"

The bartender shrugged, "He lived over on sixth last time he mentioned it, now get outta here before I get someone to drag your ass out."

“Alright, alright, I’m gone.” Katsuki turned to leave. “If you see him before I do, tell him Kacchan wants to talk to him.”

He slammed the door behind him before the guy could say anything else.

“We assure you that we are doing everything in our power to find the culprits behind Endeavor’s disappearance and have both detectives and heroes working around the clock to investigate leads in the case. Thank you.”

Tsukauchi bowed and retreated, finally, off the stage and through the door into the back offices, thankfully far from the cameras. Eraserhead was waiting for him with a coffee as soon as the door shut behind him, “How did it go?”

“Terrible, as expected.” Tsukauki responded, taking the coffee gratefully. “You’re just lucky you’re underground and have an excuse not to deal with them.”

“Why do you think I chose it?” Eraser huffed. “I finished shaking down the known trigger dealers, but it was a bust, as expected. None of them are high enough in the operation to know anything.” He took a sip of his own coffee. “The vultures end up asking about the abuse?”

Tsukauchi glared at him, “What do you think?”

“Hmmm.” Eraser grimaced. “I’m sure *that* went over well.”

Tsukauchi sighed, “Yeah, about as well as it’ll go over if we can’t find him. I talked to All Might about the All for One lead. He said he’s fairly certain he’s gone, but he’ll look into it.”

“Well, at least that’s something.” Eraser sighed. “And Viridian’s aware of the situation and knows to stay away.”

Tsukauchi raised an eyebrow, “You really think he will?”

“Not a chance.” Eraser swallowed the rest of his coffee. “But a man can hope.”

Katsuki had no idea *where* on sixth street Dabi lived, but he’d be lying if he said he wasn’t planning on just knocking on every door until he found him. Thankfully he didn’t have to. He had just arrived on the street when he saw a sketchy looking figure leaving one of the

buildings, hood pulled up and jacket zipped all the way past his chin.

Katsuki walked purposefully toward him and knocked him with his shoulder as he passed, “If you’re gonna hide your scars, you should be less obvious about it.”

“Shut up, Kacchan.” Dabi growled back. “I’m not in the mood to babysit today.”

“Yeah, you’re *sick,* right?” Katsuki scoffed as Dabi froze. “I don’t care, I just want some info.”

“Get it from someone else.” Dabi started walking away. “I’m busy.”

“Ogawa’s missing.”

Dabi froze and whipped around, “What?”

“I said Ogawa’s missing.” Katsuki repeated him. “And everyone’s too busy with Endeavor to care about some minor criminal disappearing into thin air.”

Katsuki’s eyes widened as Dabi grabbed his wrist with an almost uncomfortably hot hand that probably would have burned anyone without a fire quirk and dragged him into the house he’d just left. As soon as they were inside, Dabi slammed the door shut and turned on him.

“How long has he been gone?”

Katsuki shrugged, “At least a week, from what I can tell. I think I was the last person to see him.”

“Fuck.” Dabi ran his hand through his hair. “Ogawa was an instant villain a couple months ago, right?”

“Yeah?” Katsuki eyed him suspiciously. “It’s how he got caught. You think this has something to do with why he disappeared?”

Dabi stared at him for a long moment, “If I’m gonna give you that info, I’m gonna need you to do something for me.”

Katsuki stared back, calculating the risk, “What would you need?”

“Just ask a couple people the right questions.” Dabi shrugged. “Nothing illegal.”

Katsuki raised his eyebrows, “And you can’t do it yourself because?”

“Because reasons, brat.” Dabi growled. “So will ya do it or not?”

Katsuki thought for a minute. On the one hand, there must be a reason Dabi wasn’t willing to do it himself, but on the other he obviously knew *something,* and Katsuki owed it to Ogawa to do everything in his power to find him, “Fine, I’ll do it. So what do you know?”

Dabi’s shoulders slumped, “Have you ever heard of something called the *villain factory?”*

“Enlighten me.” Katsuki grumbled.

“From what I’ve dug up, they’re either partnered with the biggest trigger operation in the city, or they’re behind it.” Dabi said. “But what you’re gonna be interested in is the disappearances.”

Katsuki almost growled in frustration, “Get to the fucking point.”

“It’s a pattern.” Dabi said seriously. “A guy gets dosed with trigger, turns into an instant villain, then anywhere from a few weeks to a few months later, they’re gone.”

“You think this villain factory took Ogawa.” Katsuki confirmed.

“It fits the pattern.” Dabi nodded. “But what I want to know is why they took Endeavor too.”

Shouto Todoroki felt numb.

His entire life had been lived around his father. All the training, the beatings, even his own birth had been directed and overseen by that man, and now he was nowhere to be found. The police assured him that they would find him, of course, but people broke promises all the time. Shouto had learned that the hard way after too many times of Endeavor promising he’d stop hitting him or training him so hard. It never happened. Even if they *did* find Endeavor, though, things would never be the same. The police *knew* now. And the public knew. Everyone knew how much of an asshole Endeavor really was and Shouto wasn’t sure how he was supposed to feel about that.

There was a rustling behind him and Shouto unleashed a torrent of ice on instinct. Police were supposed to be stationed in front of the house just in case the people who took Endeavor came after them as well, so

how did someone get into the back yard?

He looked at the miniature glacier he'd created, stepping back slightly as a muffled *boom* sounded from inside. The ice shook slightly before a thin section of it exploded outward and a boy around his age wearing a middle school uniform stalked out of it, brushing a piece of ice from his shoulder with a scowl, "Well hello to you too, Icyhot."

"That's not my name." Shouto said slowly. "How did you get in here?"

"Through the ivy hole." The kid said, like it should be obvious and not like it turned Shouto's entire world on it's head. "It's how you and your siblings sneak out, right? So why shouldn't I use it to sneak in?"

It was logical, except for the fact that no one but their family knew about the place where Touya and Natsuo had picked the mortar out of the bricks and trained the ivy on the wall to grow over it. It had to be discreet enough to fool Endeavor, but if they needed to sneak away for whatever reason, it was the only way out that their father would never find. Only Shouto and his siblings had ever known about it.

So how did this stranger find out?

"Listen, that's not important." The kid huffed and sat down on the bench beside him like he hadn't just snuck into the number two hero's backyard. Well, former number two hero, if things kept going the way they were going right now. "People call me Kacchan. I'm trying to find the people who took your dad."

Shouto blinked a few times. That name really didn't match the kid in front of him, but he said he was trying to find the *people* who took Endeavor, which implied that he *wasn't* looking for Endeavor. Interesting.

He eyed the kid suspiciously, "Why?"

"They took a friend of mine." Kacchan shrugged. "Took a lot of people, apparently."

"And you think I can help?" Shouto said skeptically. "I already told the police everything I know."

"And *I'm* not the police." Kacchan rolled his eyes. "I just have a few questions and then I'll be out of your ridiculous hair."

Shouto *should* call for the police. If the house weren't so large, they'd

probably have already heard the commotion and come running, but...well, if Kacchan knew about the ivy hole and knew Shouto's quirk, based on the nickname he'd chosen for him, what else did he know about them? Plus...well, it was almost definitely stupid, but Shouto had been cooped up in the house ever since the police has officially cleared him and his siblings of murder. He couldn't even watch tv without being berated with stories about Endeavor and exposes about the abuse, so this was the most entertainment he'd had in days.

Knowing he'd probably regret it, Shouto sat down beside the kid, "What do you want to know?"

Kacchan smiled at his victory, "Did your dad take any drugs?"

Shouto blinked in shock a few times, "Are you seriously asking me if the number two hero was a drug addict?"

"Well, he was apparently a wife beater, so I don't think anything would surprise me at this point." Kacchan said casually. "Did he ever take something called Trigger? It would have made his quirk a lot stronger."

Shouto shook his head, "He hated Trigger. He rated all the time about how using it was basically cheating. He wanted to beat All Might by proving his own strength, not by using steroids."

"Dabi said that was probably the case…" Kacchan muttered. "And you never knew of his getting dosed by someone else, right?"

Shouto glared at him, "I'm pretty sure the number two hero was skilled enough to keep himself from getting roofied."

"A simple yes or no would have worked." Kacchan laughed. "Alright, last question. How are you and the other two brats doing?"

Shouto stared at him for a long moment until he realized the question was serious, "...you're joking, right?"

"Sadly, no." Kacchan sighed. "The asshole who sent me wanted to make sure you were all ok for some reason. Beats me, but hey, a deal is a deal and as long as I get the info I'm after, I don't care."

"Who would…?" Shouto's mind raced as he took in the new information. Who would both know about the ivy hole and would have an interest in making sure Shouto and his siblings were ok? Who

would know what Shouto's quirk was and would want to help a random kid who was trying to track down the people who kidnapped Endeavor. He could only think of one possibility, but that was impossible. "Touya."

"No idea who that is." Kacchan dismissed. "And like I said, I don't really care, so are ya gonna answer my question or not?"

"We're fine, I guess." Shouto said finally. "The only person who ever hurt us was the old man, so now that he's gone...Well, we'll see. Fuyumi is taking care of us for now."

"Good enough for me." Kacchan stood up and started walking back in the direction of the ivy hole, almost invisible in the growing darkness, then stopped suddenly. "Before Endeavor went missing, do you know if there were any bees hanging around the house?"

"Bees?" Shouto felt like Kacchan's questions were getting more and more ridiculous and he was starting to wonder if this whole thing was just a big prank. "Didn't you say the other one was the last question?"

"Whatever." Kacchan huffed and started stalking away again. "See you never."

"Endeavor was going to call an exterminator." Shouto offered. "Fuyumi only found a couple in the kitchen, but he had zero patience for that type of thing. Should we have told the police about that?"

"No clue." The kid shrugged. "Have a nice life."

Shouto watched him disappear into the ivy and was left with more questions than he'd answered for him. He didn't bother melting the remaining ice before going inside and finding Fuyumi and Natsuo, who were playing a card game at the kitchen table. He walked up to them with zero preamble.

"I think Touya might be alive."

Katsuki didn't know *why* exactly he'd asked about the bees, but it was infuriatingly weird that Icyhot had said yes. Obviously, when Dabi had said that the *not illegal* favor he needed involved tresspassing in the number two hero's house, he'd basically said *fuck that* and told Scarface no way. He'd find whatever info he needed about the villain factory on his own, thanks. He'd figured a good place to start would be to retrace Ogawa's steps from their last hangout, but that had been

a total bust.

The only weird thing he'd found for his trouble was a small handful of smashed bees in the alley outside of Ogawa's house that were probably just some crazy inventor's drones or something. He wouldn't have thought twice about it if he hadn't remembered the annoying bees that had kept hovering around their ice cream the last time they hung out. Even then, he had basically written it off as a coincidence until he'd impulsively asked Icyhot about them.

The lack of clues had frustrated him enough that he'd ended up going to the Todoroki house anyway, not that it had really given him a lot of info, but Dabi would be happy to know the family was ok. Maybe. Actually, who knew what was going on in that guy's brain? Katsuki wouldn't put it beyond him to completely hate those kids and want to make sure they were miserable or something, but he already had the info he needed and he wasn't being paid to care.

Katsuki pulled out his phone and texted Dabi what he'd learned before heading home. He needed to get some rest if he wanted to figure out what those bees meant and find his friend...and he should probably tell the police what he'd learned too, but they most likely wouldn't even have the resources to act on the info until Endeavor was found. Katsuki knew he should have asked Amplifier before talking to Dabi about the case, but with literally every hero busy looking for the number two, he figured that he'd just have to ask forgiveness instead of permission. He was gonna be a hero anyway, so it was his responsibility to help out where he could and find his friend.

"It's that vigilante's fault." The doctor said calmly, noting with satisfaction that Endeavor's eyes burned with rage at his words. "It's Viridian's fault that you lost the number two spot. It's his fault that you'll never beat All Might. It's his fault that you're going to have your family and your masterpiece taken away from you."

The chains anchoring Endeavor to the wall strained as he thrashed against them, but the doctor kept speaking through the earpiece, calmly planting the seeds that the hero's quickly deteriorating brain would latch onto, "You'll need to cause a significant amount of chaos to find him, though. Destroy everything in your path, otherwise Viridian will get away."

It was almost sad to waste such a perfect subject, but All for One had insisted that Endeavor's purpose was short-lived. Most of their other

experiments underwent extensive modifications to prepare their minds and bodies to hold multiple quirks, but Endeavor himself had been a rush job, getting only the most minor of reinforcements before All for One had forced multiple copies of his own quirk into his body. That meant, of course, that the quirks would destroy him sooner rather than later, but Endeavor was the star of tonight's performance and he was meant to burn fast and bright.

Their newest Berserker growled, pulling at the chains again until the doctor pressed a button to release him. He didn't waste anytime tearing the door to his holding cell off its hinges and releasing himself into the city, intent on fulfilling the purpose that Sensei had created for him. He would distract the heroes from the final phase of their experiments and get rid of that annoying vigilante all in one fell swoop! It was the perfect definition of two birds with one stone.

Or perhaps more accurately, two marbles with one berserker.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 02.22.2021

Endeavor

Chapter Summary

Endeavor returns after his disappearance.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Sarapp97

Memes!
X X X

But hadn't he also promised to protect people when he became a vigilante? Hadn't he basically promised the heroes that he'd help out when they weren't enough? Based on the size of those flames, Endeavor *had* been modified, or at least drugged, to make his quirk stronger. He knew that every hero even remotely close would be called in, but the last berserkers they'd faced had been capable of destroying city blocks!

Filled with determination, Izuku started running again. He'd stay out of sight and wouldn't get anywhere *near* Endeavor, but if he could help evacuate, then the real heroes could focus on fighting! He'd be able to keep all his promises!

He ran across the rooftops until he had a good vantage point of one of the burning buildings. It was a business building, the kind with floor to ceiling windows that were starting to be backlit from the flames. There didn't seem to be too many people left in the building, but those that were there were focused on the windows, which meant that the fire might be blocking the stairs. Izuku could see Rock Lock on the ground below the building, so he grabbed his slingshot from his toolbelt and started shooting out the windows. The first one shattered with a satisfying crash and Rock Lock didn't waste any time using his tiles and debris to make a staircase to the window and get the people down. Izuku kept breaking windows until Rock Lock got everyone out, then ran to find other people to save.

Some buildings, Izuku just helped by breaking the windows, others he ran inside and helped get people out. Sometimes he had to shoot some marbles at people to stop them from looting the local businesses and get out of there! Didn't they know how dangerous staying around was?

"Viridian!"

Amplifier's voice echoed over the chaos and Izuku stopped. He tried not to shuffle awkwardly as the civilians around him turned to look as he was called out. He couldn't see Amplifier and if she was using her quirk to talk to him, she probably didn't know exactly where he was either, so why ask for him specifically when there were so many other heroes around.

"Viridian! If you can hear me, you are the Berserker's target! Get out of the area as soon as possible! Heroes! Please pass along the message!"

Despite the fires roaring all around him, Izuku felt like he'd been doused in ice water. *He* was the target?! Izuku realized he'd started hyperventilating and forced himself to take a deep breath. This wasn't good. Amplifier had referred to Endeavor as a Berserker, which gave a good indication of his power level and if Izuku was his target, he probably wouldn't stop his rampage until he either passed out or got what he wanted. Izuku *should* take off his hoodie and go home as fast as he could and let the heroes take care of the situation, but the last time Endeavor had been involved in a berserker attack, thirteen people had died and he'd been the hero in that situation. Izuku couldn't let people die tonight just because he was being selfish and was too afraid to fight.

He started running, focusing on getting to the place where the flames were the most intense, a mental map forming in his head alongside his list of Endeavor's weaknesses, hoping that whatever experiments the villain factory had done on him hadn't changed those *too* much. Endeavor's main weaknesses, of course, was his own quirk and his tendency to ignore his surroundings. He had a high collateral damage rate because he didn't tend to care what was around him as long as he took care of the villain and his fights tended to end rather quickly, even more so than heroes like Ingenium who were focused on speed. At first, Izuku had thought that was because he was trying to have the best incident resolution rate, and that was certainly part of it. The faster Endeavor beat one villain, the faster he could move onto the next enemy and the next arrest. But in the research Izuku had done since Eraser had told him that Endeavor was missing, he'd discovered another reason for the short fights.

Endeavor had a tendency to overheat.

Like most flame users, Endeavor had a good amount of heat resistance, but he didn't have heat immunity. As with every quirk, there would come a point where Endeavor's flames would turn on him and he'd start getting heat exhaustion. If he kept fighting past that point, he would get weaker and more dehydrated until he eventually theoretically passed out. Not that Izuku planned on still fighting him past that point. No, basically what he was planning was a giant game of tag mixed with hide and seek.

He'd started being a vigilante by just running, after all.

Izuku could hear both Amplifier and Present Mic yelling by the time he saw Backdraft fighting the fires. He heistated for a split second before deciding that there was pretty much no way Backdraft would

remember one stupid kid from almost ten months ago and ran up to him, “What areas have already finished evacuating?”

“Second street and the warehouse…” Backdraft did a double take as he realized who he was talking to, “What the fuck, kid?! Didn’t you hear that you’re the target?! Get outta here!”

Izuku shook his head, “We need to get him away from civilians and keep the fight to unpopulated areas, hopefully without a lot of water. You said the warehouse district has already evacuated, right? I’ll lead him along second and take him there. Have any heroes that aren’t focused on rescue follow us!”

“Kid!”

Izuku ignored him as he started running. Backdraft tried to use his water spurts to knock Izuku off his feet, but he simply rolled and kept running, soaked but otherwise none the worse for wear. At least the water would form another layer of protection from the flames right?

He skidded to a stop as he rounded a corner and the main fight came into view. A small group of heroes was fighting Endeavor, but they couldn’t get close to him because his flames were just too hot. At first glance, Izuku could see Present Mic and Ingenium, at the very least, but it looked like Amplifier had switched to focusing on evacuation and left the main fight to those with more powerful quirks. Endeavor himself was growling and seemed to be trying to do the most damage he could and kept shooting bursts of flame toward both the heroes and the civilians that were still struggling to evacuate, considering how quickly Endeavor kept running toward them. Izuku took a deep breath as he loaded a marble into his slingshot.

“Mom, Kaminari.” Izuku whispered softly to himself. “I’m sorry. I know it’s risky, but I’ll find a way to come home to you. I promise.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 02.24.2021

Berserker

Chapter Summary

The fight against Endeavor

Chapter Notes

Art!
Anime X X X X
KennsCorner
RandomAssRaven X
I'm totally a Bee
Kiri kin, Deku simp X
Well_Nobody_Knows X
Moody
Tess_
Katsxkis
Worm Enthusist
Liz

It has literally been two days! How is there so much art?!?!
Memes at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

And with that, he let the marble fly, hitting Endeavor squarely on the back of the head. Time seemed to slow down as Endeavor slowly turned, his teal eyes burning almost as bright as his flames as the pure rage of a Berserker shone through them.

Izuku tried to keep his voice from cracking but wasn't entirely successful as he yelled, "I heard you were looking for me! Good Luck!"

Izuku turned on his heel as Endeavor roared behind him. He winced at the heat as he pulled himself up onto the nearest fire escape and started running across the rooftops, avoiding any buildings that were too burned out to support his weight. He weaved as much as he could while still keeping to the evacuated areas, his goal being to keep just out of Endeavor's reach as he led the hero away. The heroes he'd been fighting helped slow him down significantly, which Izuku was grateful for, but it still seemed like no time at all by the time they'd reached the warehouse district.

He needed a building that would retain the heat. Wood would burn

too quickly, so that was obviously out, but...there! Izuku saw a vacant warehouse that looked like it was mostly concrete and had a metal roof that should theoretically reflect the heat back down onto Endeavor once he was inside. He smiled cheekily back at Endeavor and made sure the hero saw him run inside, then took a deep breath. He had probably a minute and a half until Endeavor got here, maybe a little more if the heroes could distract him.

There were a few industrial grade fans on the floor and Izuku rushed to turn them on. They would cool the building down slightly, but the increased airflow would make Endeavor's flames burn hotter and help him overheat a lot faster. As soon as all the fans were on, his next priority was sabotaging the fire suppression system. It would ruin his plan if the sprinklers went off in the middle of the fight.

He found the offices and looked around, finding the fire suppression system right as Endeavor burst down the door. Izuku panicked and grabbed his knife, cutting whatever wires he thought linked the fire system to the control board and hoped it would be enough. Thankfully, no alarms went off and Endeavor was undoubtedly already burning hot enough to activate them if he was going to, so they were in the clear...for now.

"Where...brat?"

Izuku held his breath as Endeavor growled out threats. He...well, his plan was going as planned so far, but this was about as far as he had gotten thought out.

"What are you thinking?"

Izuku flinched and grabbed his pipes as he heard a harsh whisper behind him. He spun around and cringed as he saw Present Mic looking at him in exasperation, "I know Shou said you were suicidal, but seriously kid?! I thought he told you to stay away from this!"

"Shou?" Izuku shook his head, that wasn't important, "I didn't have a choice! He was gonna keep going after civilians until he found me."

"Ugh.." Present mic scowled. "I really wish I could deny that, kid. We were trying to convince him you weren't there, but...he wasn't buying it, obviously."

"Yeah, Berserkers can be single minded." Izuku nodded.

"Did you even have a plan besides self sacrifice?" Present Mic sighed.

“Yes!” Izuku blurted out. “Well, kinda. Endeavor’s main weakness is overheating and the villain factory has made his quirk exponentially more powerful, which makes his weakness more powerful as well. He hasn’t been missing long enough for the villain factory to be able to adequately reinforce his body against the increased heat, so…”

“So we get him to produce flames until he passes out?” Present Mic confirmed. “How do we keep ourselves from passing out before he does?”

Izuku grimaced, “I hadn’t gotten that far yet?”

“We can use the doors.”

Izuku jumped again at another voice, “How do you people keep finding me?! I’ve been getting better at stealth!”

“You’re soaked, kid.” Ingenium sounded like he was grinning under his helmet. “You’re dripping water everywhere. It’s literally a trail leading to you.”

“Which means Endeavor hasn’t noticed, because he doesn’t care about situational awareness.” Izuku sighed in relief. “Good. So doors?”

“If we enter and exit quickly enough, we can avoid getting burned and use the cool air outside to recover and protect ourselves, all while confusing Endeavor and hotboxing him inside.” Ingenium said calmly. “That was your plan, right?”

“Pretty much…” Izuku said, suddenly a lot more insecure now that his plan had to involve other people.

“Ingenium! Endeavor’s getting bored searching for the vigilante…” One of Endeavor’s sidekicks slid into the room and froze when he saw Izuku. “Oh, there he is! Hey!”

“Thanks Crawler.” Ingenium shook his arms out. “Well, if we’re gonna do this, let’s do it.”

Izuku nodded and was about to run out when Present Mic held his back, “Wait until everyone’s in position, then you go.”

“Wait!” Izuku dug into his tool belt and grabbed as many marbles as he could and shoved them into Crawler’s hands. “Give those to as many heroes as you can. We can toss them around to confuse him, since he won’t be able to pinpoint when it’s actually me throwing

them versus the heroes."

Crawler gave a crooked grin and looked at Ingenium, "Smart kid."

Izuku blushed as the heroes sped away, leaving him alone with Present Mic. So that was the Crawler, the hero that Eraser had said went legit after starting as a vigilante. It would be cool, but...Crawler had a quirk. There wasn't any point in thinking about something that was impossible anyway, especially when he needed to be focused on staying alive.

"Everyone that's here is in position." Present Mic whispered. "You know you don't have to do this, right kid? You can leave now and we can handle this fight."

"If this wasn't the most effective way, you would've already dragged me out." Izuku pointed out. "As long as he knows I'm here, he'll stay right where we want him. Even without the Berserker modifications, it would be almost impossible to take him down, but with them? We need every advantage we can get."

"And here I was thinking you just had Eraser wrapped around your finger…" Present Mic muttered. "But no, you have to be all logical like he is. No wonder the man likes you."

Izuku's eyes widened, but he didn't have a chance to think of a response before Mic was nodding to him, "Go!"

Izuku nodded in determination and took a deep breath, then ran out into the main warehouse, "Hey! You're really bad at hide and seek!"

"Boy..." Endeavor growled and started stalking toward him. "Ruined...me…!"

"Um…" Izuku looked behind him. "Me? I don't really think I'm really capable of that…"

He noticed the shift in Endeavor's stance a split second before flames came shooting from his hands. He dodged into a roll and took the brief moment to duck out of view behind one of the fans. He looked to his side and noticed that all of the doors had been opened and there were a variety of heroes waiting at each one. From his hiding place, Izuku watched as Crawler gave him a cocky grin and lobbed one of the marbles Izuku had given him at Endeavor before taking off running. He moved pretty fast, so he couldn't be sure, but from the way Endeavor stumbled, Crawler had also taken a few shots of his

own with some kind of air bullet attack.

He had to forcibly remind himself a few times that he wasn't there to fanboy as he watched each of the heroes and sidekicks present take their turns taking shots at Endeavor. Everytime that Izuku noticed that Endeavor was starting to get restless and think that Viridian had left, he gave a thumbs up to the nearest hero and ran as fast as he could. He had to be careful to keep his distance and watch his feet, because unlike most of Ingenium's sidekicks, he didn't have a speed quirk and unlike the other heroes that were helping out, he didn't have a quirk that could block Endeavor's fire, but he mostly managed to not get burned. Whenever he burst through one of the doors after running past, he was greeted with smiles and pats on the back to let him know he'd survived and done a good job. Izuku couldn't keep a proud smile off his own face and honestly, if it hadn't been such a life or death situation, he would almost say he was having *fun.*

He had just finished one of his bait runs when he heard someone behind him yell his vigilante name unnaturally loud. He slowly turned to see Amplifier, who looked extremely pissed off and more than a little worried. Izuku gave her a guilty smile, "Um...hi Amplifier!"

"Eraser specifically told you to run in the opposite direction." Amplifier sounded so done. "He told you to run in the opposite direction and what did you do?"

"It's not like that!" Izuku insisted, "I have *backup* this time!"

"Uh-huh." Amplifier looked skeptical, but she stopped when Present Mic came up behind her and put a hand on her shoulder.

"Come on, Amplifier." Mic said. "Lay off the kid for a minute, he actually had a pretty good plan."

"Just because he's smart doesn't mean he's not an idiot." Amplifier argued. "But Eraser's on his way. He was chasing a lead in another city, but he should be back here."

"No!" Izuku yelled, making Amplifier jump. "Um, sorry, it's just that, um, we're actually using his quirk as a weapon? If Eraserhead erases his quirk, it might actually set us back, oddly enough."

"It's actually pretty brilliant." Present Mic added. "And it's working. See for yourself."

When they peaked in the door, Endeavor was already starting to show

the effects of the fight. It was blisteringly hot inside the warehouse and was painful to be inside just for the time it took to run through to one of the other doors, but the heroes were getting a rest to cool down between each attack. Endeavor wasn't. His face was red and parts of his skin were starting to grow orange and crack in a way that looked like alog in a fireplace and his flames were burning so hot that parts of his uniform, which had more than enough heat resistant to withstand his natural quirk, had burned off. At some point, Endeavor seemed to have realized that they were toying with him, but because he was already overheating, he couldn't move quickly enough to chase him out of the building before the next attacker came. His eyes were also starting to defocus and have problems telling which of his attackers was actually his target, but Izuku didn't know whether that was from the heat or whether the experiments were still causing brain damage.

"We're, uh…" Izuku shrugged awkwardly. "We're kinda just waiting for him to pass out."

Amplifier raised an eyebrow at him, "Seriously? That's your big plan? Wait for him to pass out?"

"Every quirk has a weakness." Izuku said. "If you can exploit that weakness, you stand a chance at winning."

"Sorry to interrupt what seems to be a wonderfully heartfelt conversation," Ingenium ran up to them, "but Endeavor's caught on that Viridian hasn't shown up in a while and he's trying to leave, which means you're up, kid!"

Izuku nodded in determination and gave a small wave, "Be back soon!"

He grabbed his slingshot and the few marbles he still had left and ran into the burning warehouse, "Hey Endeavor! Did you miss me?"

Endeavor gave a sort of guttural scream and Izuku couldn't help but notice he'd become less and less...well, coherent over the course of the fight. That thought was pushed from his mind though as Endeavor's flames turned blue and he started running toward Izuku with more speed than he'd thought the man was capable of at his current temperature.

Izuku's eyes widened and he scrambled to regain his footing as he quickly changed directions, "no, no, no, no, no!'

He could feel the blistering heat behind him and realized that at some point during the fight, he'd completely dried from the soaking that Backdraft had given him earlier which meant that even that meager protection was long gone.

"Kill…" The words coming out of Endeavor's mouth were barely intelligible at this point, but they were enough to send a chill down his spine despite the heat. "Rev..enge…"

Suddenly Izuku was swept forcibly off his feet.

"I got ya kid." Crawler flung Izuku onto his back and pinballed around the room as Endeavor finished giving chase. "So I guess those blogs guessing you've got a speed quirk are wrong, huh?"

Izuku didn't answer, simply clinging tighter to Crawler's hero costume as Endeavor went beyond what was left of his limits in a final attempt to kill Izuku. Maybe...maybe he *should* have left his fight to the real heroes. It would have been a *lot* more difficult and dangerous, but maybe...

He shook his head against Crawler's back. No, he had to be here, but he had worked with the heroes and relied on them to help keep everyone safe. He hadn't gone off on his own.

"It shouldn't be too much longer." Izuku said out loud. "He's already looking worse than the other berserkers were before they were caught."

It was true. The weird veins of fire that had appeared on Endeavor's face earlier had now spread across every visible patch of skin. It almost looked like he was a piece of pottery that was about to explode in the kiln, though Izuku knew that probably wasn't the best metaphor to use. He must be in a lot of pain, so Izuku was honestly in awe at how he was still not only on his feet, but still actively fighting.

He and the Crawler both winced as the heat cranked up another notch and Izuku knew he was probably sweating through his hoodie at this point, which was embarrassing. He hoped Crawler didn't mind *too much,* "Um, maybe we should get out of here?"

"Yeah." Crawler's voice sounded dry, but they were low enough to the ground still that they thankfully avoided the worst of the smoke, which was starting to get thick. There hadn't been too much that was flammable in the warehouse, but Endeavor's final desperate attacks were enough to find anything that could conceivably burn and set it

on fire. “Hold on tight, kid, I don’t think he’s gonna let us get through the doors.”

Izuku raised his head to glance around and, sure enough, every door had been blocked by a wall of Endeavor’s flames as he used every bit of power he had left to keep Izuku from getting away again, “But…these walls are concrete. We can’t just break through!”

To his surprise, the Crawler laughed, “Kid, haven’t you ever heard the phrase *when one door closes, open a window?* ”

Izuku’s eyes widened and he frantically locked his legs in place as best he could and used his slingshot to shatter one of the windows that lined the upper border of the warehouse. It shattered with a crash and Izuku shifted so he was clutching tightly to Crawler’s back again, “Will you be able to reach that?”

“Who do you think I am?” Crawler laughed, then launched himself in the air.

Izuku had been expecting him to slide to the wall and then use his quirk to slide up, but to his surprise, Crawler actually *stepped* through the air and then started clinging to the wall. They got a few scrapes as they squeezed through the window, but Izuku honestly thought that they had perfect timing, considering that they weren’t even completely down the other side of the wall when blue flames erupted from every opening of the building, blowing out the remaining windows and forcing all the heroes surround the doors to dodge for cover to avoid getting burned. As quickly as the flames had erupted, however they disappeared. The building itself was still burning, of course, but it seemed like Endeavor had *finally* passed out.

They landed safely on the ground and Crawler straightened, which Izuku figured was probably his cue to let go if his fingers would just cooperate. Despite the fact that the danger had passed, Izuku’s muscles were still performing a death grip on Crawler, who chuckled softly as he realized the problem.

“It’s alright kid, you survived.” Crawler helped pry Izuku’s arms off him. “You did good. You’re giving vigilantes everywhere a good name.”

Izuku swallowed shakily, not really processing the compliment as he focused on making his legs support his weight. That had…that had honestest been every bit as terrifying as the first time he met Endeavor. He really hoped they weren’t going to make a habit of it.

His problems weren't over, however. Izuku felt a chill down his spine and he looked over to see Eraserhead glaring at him, "You realize that *you're* the reason I'm going grey, right?"

Izuku chuckled awkwardly, "Oh, Eraserhead! When did you get here?"

"I literally showed up in time to see you fly out of a building seconds before it exploded." Eraserhead deadpanned. "So excuse me if I'm a little pissed. You promised you'd run in the opposite direction, problem child!"

"I, uh, gotta live up to the nickname somehow, right?" Izuku said nervously, "But, umm...I do still intend to keep that promise I made to you?"

Izuku focused on keeping his body language as natural as possible as Eraser eyed him suspiciously, "Oh really? And how's that?"

"Well," Izuku pointed back at the burning warehouse, waiting for Eraser to turn to look before making his move, "that's where Endeavor is."

Izuku then booked it in the opposite direction.

"Get back here, problem child!"

Izuku couldn't help a small smile as the laughter of Present Mic, Amplifier, Ingenium, and all the other heros who'd come to help drowned out the last dregs of his terror and gave him the push he needed to disappear into the shadows. He *was* getting pretty good at this, wasn't he?

Chapter End Notes

Memes!
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End of Book Two

** * Please be aware that you have now read the equivelent of a full-length novel.* **
If you are delaying going to bed or doing your homework, this is a good stopping point. Go ahead, get a snack, and enjoy the rest

of the story!

Next Update: 02.26.2021

Involved

Chapter Summary

The world moves on...

Chapter Notes

Art!
AokBeeH X
tk.toad
Danny Clip
Animebitch-fanfichoe
Viri
Grumbee cat
TsukauchiNaomasaismyhusband X
Chaotic Collector

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Endeavor was dead.

According to the news reports, the drugs they had found in his system had short-circuited Endeavor's natural limits and forced him to go so far beyond them that he'd burned almost half of his body into ash, a result that seemed to run in the family, if the tragic end of his oldest son was any indication. Dabi would have found the whole thing deliciously ironic if he didn't feel so numb. His father was dead and he hadn't had anything to do with it. He felt robbed.

Dabi knew there was more to the story than what the news was reporting, though. Most people seemed to think that Endeavor's downfall was an isolated incident brought about by his own hubris, which Dabi might have been tempted to believe if he hadn't overheard that conversation between Eraserhead and Viridian. It was almost funny how far the media was willing to bend back on itself to prevent the general public from panicking.

The story went that Endeavor, angry about the negative publicity he'd received after the new years disaster, had sought out quirk enhancing drugs to increase his power and prove that he still deserved the number two spot. He must have gotten a bad batch, however, because

the drugs he'd taken had been cut with something that caused psychosis. It was a nice story that placed the blame on Endeavor rather than on the Hero commission or society. Just one more Icarus that flew too close to the sun and burned himself out. It was an easy story for the public to digest, which was probably why the hero commission had done nothing to deny it, assuming they hadn't been the ones to quietly come up with the cover story to begin with.

Dabi, however, wasn't the general public. He knew that his father was too prideful to have ever willingly sought out trigger, something that his brother had confirmed when Kacchan had talked to him. He *would* have done that part himself, but there was always the chance his siblings would recognize him, and that was assuming he could even get close to him with how sketchy his scars made him look. No, it would have been too risky, but despite his complicated feelings on the whole thing, it was nice to know his siblings were doing alright and have confirmation that whatever had happened, his father had been the victim, not the perpetrator.

According to what Dabi had been able to scrounge up, the villain factory had been abducting people for years and actually running experiments on them. It turned out that a lot of the more powerful villains that had been popping up randomly only to disappear or immediately get caught over the past five or so years were actually the result of these experiments, so it stood to reason that the villain factory had run experiments on Endeavor as well, though what those experiments were was still a mystery.

All those years plotting revenge...all for his final victory to be snatched up by some shadow organization that he hadn't even known existed. His only consolation was that his father had definitely suffered, not that it was enough to stop Dabi from obsessing over finding the villain factory. He wouldn't rest until he'd found the people that had finally succeeded in killing Endeavor.

The only question was, when he finally found them, would he destroy them or join them?

"No. Absolutely not."

Shouta looked at the kid in front of them, eyes full of determination, but he refused to budge, even when Bakugo looked like he was about to explode, probably literally based on what Amplifier had told him about the kid's quirk.

“I’ve been building a lot of connections in the underground.” Bakugo argued. “I can take the role of an informant and help you find the people who took Ogawa. He’s my friend, and I can help, so just let me help already!”

“You’re a kid, Bakugo.” Amplifier said kindly. “It’s too dangerous.”

“I already figured out that it’s dangerous.” Bakugo grumbled. “Why do you think I’m *here* instead of going off on my own.”

“You already filed a missing person’s report.” Tsukauchi pointed out. “You’re the one that brought his disappearance to our attention, so now you need to leave it to the police and the heroes. We’ll find him.”

Bakugo glared at him, “Like you found Endeavor?”

They were silent, but Bakugo just scoffed, “Yeah, the two cases are linked, aren’t they? Like hell Endeavor would actually shoot up like that when he saw the whole drugs thing as cheating. I already knew Ogawa was an instant villain, so this obviously has something to do with trigger and probably the villain factory too, am I right?”

Shouta froze, “How did you hear that name.”

Bakugo raised his chin defiantly, “Like I said, I have connections. Villains will trust me in a way that they won’t trust you, which is something that you need after what happened to Endeavor. I know you’re looking for him, so just let me be involved in the case!”

Shouta stood his ground, “We already have one idiot kid that we’re trying to kick out of this case because it’s too dangerous, we’re not about to invite another *child* to join the investigation, Bakugo, it just wouldn’t be logical.”

“What?” Bakugo growled, “So you’re just gonna do nothing until Ogawa turns up and starts destroying shit like Endeavor did?!”

“We’re not doing nothing.” Tsukauchi put a hand on Bakugo’s shoulder. “We’re throwing everything we have into finding these villains, even Principal Nedzu from UA is getting involved with the investigation, but you’re still a kid, Bakugo. It’s dangerous and it isn’t your responsibility to track down a criminal organization that’s been giving full-on pros trouble.”

Bakugo obviously wasn’t buying it and Shouta rubbed the bridge of his nose in frustration. First Viridian and now this one. Problem

children, every single one of them.

Amplifier had been uncharacteristically silent as she thought, “How about we make a deal, kiddo?”

Bakugo looked at her suspiciously, but didn’t immediately shoot the idea down, “What do you have in mind?”

“Well, our main complaint isn’t your capability or your determination.” Amplifier said. “It’s just that an investigation like this is dangerous and should be left to the pros.”

“I don’t care…” Bakugo tried to interrupt but Amplifier held up a hand to stop him.

“You want to be a hero, right?” she asked. “You’re planning on taking the UA entrance exam?”

“Of course I am.” Bakugo growled. “Why else would I go to your stupid group?”

“Then focus on getting into UA.” Amplifier ordered. “If you get in and officially become a pro-hero in training, *then* we’ll talk about letting you be involved in the case in a more official capacity, like an internship or something. Admit it, Bakugo, you know that Ogawa wouldn’t want you losing sight of your goal this close to the exam. He’d want your first priority to be becoming the hero that you’ve been working to be.”

It was a good deal, logical, and would buy them time to solve the case before another kid elbowed his way into becoming a target like Viridian had. It wasn’t the *best* case scenario, obviously, but it was workable. Shouta expected the kid to keep pushing, but to his surprise, Bakugo actually seemed to consider it.

After a long moment, Bakugo’s shoulders slumped in defeat, “After I get into UA, you’ll let me officially help with the case?”

“We’ll *consider* it.” Shouta answered. “But only if you haven't been going off and doing vigilante-type work on your own. Let’s close that loophole real quick.”

Bakugo gave an amused scoff and rolled his eyes, “Fine. I won’t do any more investigating on my own.”

“More?!” Tsukauchi sighed. “Why are teenagers like this?”

Bakugo shrugged and turned to leave, then stopped, “You were busy with Endeavor and I didn’t know how big the case was. By the way, am I just going crazy, or are *bees* related to all this somehow?”

There was a heavy silence as Shouta and the other two stared at him in shock. Finding out about the villain factory was one thing, but making the connection with Queen Bee? Just how much investigating had the kid done? Had he already made himself a target?

Bakugo stuffed his hands in his pockets and turned to leave, “I’m gonna take that as a yes. You might wanna ask the Todoroki kids about ‘em. But what would I know? I’m just a kid. I’m not involved in the case. *Yet.”*

Once he was gone, Tsukauchi slumped down in his seat, “What is it about this case that attracts crazy kids? They should be doing normal teenager stuff like getting ice cream and recording stupid videos.”

“In their defense, neither Viridian nor Bakugo are really *normal.* ” Amplifier sat on Tsukauchi’s desk, ignoring his glare. “Bakugo isn’t lying when he says he’s made underground connections. Apparently after that run in with Stain, rumors started going around about *Kacchan* and how he’s a future hero to watch out for. It may be at least partially because of a deranged serial killer, but Bakugo’s already making a name for himself.”

“Which means that the last thing he needs is to attract the attention of the villain factory.” Shouta argued. “A kid like him with a powerful quirk? I can’t imagine how tempting that would be for the psychopaths running these experiments.”

“We’re not gonna be able to keep him out of the case forever.” Tsukauchi said finally. “UA will help keep him safe, right?”

Shouta nodded, “Once he’s a hero student, he’ll fall under the same laws and protections as an intern, and since Nedzu will probably find the whole thing entertaining, we’ll both be keeping an eye on him. Same goes for Viridian if we can manage to catch him. We’ll protect them even if we can’t keep them out of danger.”

“Well, that’s better than nothing.” Tsukauchi groaned as he stood. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, I apparently need to go ask the Todorokis a few more questions. Good luck with your vigilante.”

“Thanks.” Shouta’s face twisted in displeasure. “I have a feeling I’m gonna need it.”

Izuku sparred with Denki, letting the familiar motions and the presence of his friend distract him just enough to keep himself from spiraling again. He had thought the villain factory was farther along in their experiments than they apparently were, so he'd been justified in assuming that they had modified his body to at least survive his quirk, but apparently he'd been wrong, even if the heroes had made the same assumption. From what Izuku could figure out, the experiments had messed with Endeavor's limits and prevented him from passing out from quirk exhaustion like he normally would. Instead, Endeavor had simply gotten hotter and hotter until he'd burned himself out. Izuku just had to remind himself that it was the villain's fault that Endeavor was dead, not his, and there would have been a lot more damage and injuries if he hadn't gotten there when he did and been willing to play the bait. He just had to remember that he'd done the best he could.

At least they weren't going to have to face multiple quirked monsters anytime soon, though. If the experiments weren't even far enough along to keep Endeavor alive with the stronger quirk, there was no way the villain factory was even close to ready to move onto what Izuku thought was the next phase of their plan. It was a small mercy, but one that Izuku was grateful for as Denki managed to throw him off balance. Maybe by the time the villain factory's supersoldiers were ready, Denki would be a hero and able to fight them! Izuku hoped so. If the whole thing with Endeavor had proved anything, it was that All Might had been right.

Hero work *was* really dangerous.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 02.28.2021

Legacy

Chapter Summary

Life moves forward.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Bloody Everbee
Happiness Tornado
retchz
xXJoshOwoXx
Doodle
g-asaky

Memes!
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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Ogawa could feel other people inside his head and it was the weirdest sensation he'd ever felt. He saw them sometimes, in the long hours where he slept between sessions with the doctor, dark shadowy figures with glowing eyes that didn't know how to react to him, just like he didn't know how to react to them. As weird as it was, though, at least it made the whole experience less lonely. Kumo seemed to think the same thing, considering he wouldn't' stop asking questions about them.

He heard Kumo roll over and take a breath and just knew that he was going to ask something else ridiculous, "Have you tried talking to them?"

"They don't talk." Ogawa rolled his eyes. "They're just there. I don't know how to explain it and, honestly, I think I'm getting better at ignoring them. I can hardly feel them at all if I'm not thinking about them."

"Do you think they're getting weaker or are you just getting used to it?" Kumo sat up. "Or do you think that they're integrating into you?"

Ogawa couldn't help laughing, "What? You think that they're becoming me or something?"

“More like you’re becoming them.” Kumo’s eyes shone with excitement and curiosity. “Because your quirk changed when they showed up, right? What if that’s a part of them?”

“Um…” Ogawa paused. Something about that felt *right* somehow, but he couldn’t put his finger on *why* exactly. “You think that my quirk somehow mixed with theirs or something and that’s why I can feel them?”

Kumo shrugged, “I mean, maybe. And if your quirks combined, your personalities might blend together too.”

“Because that’s not creepy at all.” Ogawa swallowed nervously. If Kumo was right, was he even *him* anymore? If not, then who was he? He didn’t know anything about the people that these monsters had forced into his head! What if one of them was pure evil or something and all that work he’d done in the redemption group was all for nothing. What if one of them liked to hurt people and he got out of here only to try and hurt his friends. “I…I don’t think I’d like that.”

Kumo shrugged, “Well, until then I guess you’ve got live-in friends. I’ll try not to be jealous.”

Ogawa laughed, “Jealous that I have other friends or jealous that they live in my head?”

“Why not both?” Kumo grinned and laid back down. “Who knows, maybe I’ll get some live-in friends of my own.”

Ogawa frowned. From what Kumo had told him, he’d mostly just been *there* while other prisoners came and went from the cell next door, but shortly after Ogawa had woken up with the other people in his head, the doctor had started dragging Kumo away to have sessions of his own. The first time had been terrifying because Ogawa thought that their captors had somehow just gotten bored of his cellmate and they were going to get rid of him and he’d never see him again, but he’d come back, unconscious and in pain just like Ogawa had from his first session.

Ogawa had thought his own sessions would stop after that, since apparently whatever they’d tried to do was successful, but instead the torture had simply changed gears. Before, the pain had come from whatever drugs they gave him, but now the pain seemed more like a punishment. It was almost like they were training him just like someone would train a new puppy, except for the fact that they used torture instead of a spray bottle. Ogawa didn’t know *why,* exactly, but

he knew that the doctor wanted them to be obedient.

He laid down onto his back and stared at the ceiling of his cell. Between the *training* and the other people in his head, it was only a matter of time before he lost himself completely. He needed to get out of here before he wasn't *him* anymore.

"Congratulations Everyone!" Amplifier smiled brightly, her voice echoing around the room. "Your participation in the Villain Rehabilitation Program is now complete!"

Everyone cheered and Katsuki joined in halfheartedly. Today was supposed to be happy. They'd done it! They'd fulfilled all the requirements and basically graduated and theoretically become better people. Those who had arrest records would have them wiped and they finally had a chance to start over and do things legally this time. It was wonderful!

But Ogawa was missing it. He was missing it and going through who knew what and Katsuki couldn't even help him because he wasn't a hero yet. He wasn't an idiot. He'd known when he'd done that favor for Dabi that he was operating on the grey side of the law, but it hadn't really kicked in how dangerous that might be until after Endeavor had resurfaced, tearing shit up and going crazy. If he'd gotten caught trespassing or Icyhot had called for the police or something, Bakugo could have gotten a mark on his record that would prevent him from applying to UA. Even worse, if the wrong people had been listening when he was asking around, he could find himself disappeared right beside Ogawa and no one would even know to look for him because he hadn't told anyone what he was doing. That was why, after Endeavor had burned himself out, Katsuki had gone to the heroes and offered to help, that way, he wouldn't get in trouble and if anything went wrong, he'd have a whole team of heroes waiting to bail him out.

But then, of course, they'd said no. Katsuki could begrudgingly respect their reasoning, especially since half the news reports from the night Endeavor went crazy highlighted how badly the former number two hero wanted to tear Viridian, who couldn't be that much older than Katsuki was, limb from limb. Still, it hurt to not be able to do anything when he felt like he should be out there, being a hero and saving his friend, so he'd thrown himself into preparing for the entrance exam instead.

Akiko elbowed him in the side, “Hey, you doing ok Kacchan?”

Katsuki blinked and shrugged, “Just kinda feels wrong to celebrate without him, you know? This was supposed to be his day too.”

She smiled sadly, “Yeah. I miss him too. But, hey, I know he’d be super proud of you if he were here. I know me and Maki are.”

After squeezing his arm reassuringly, she turned back to the front and Katsuki did the same. He could at least *try* to enjoy it, he supposed. It wasn’t like he was off the case forever, just until he got into UA and was on his way to becoming a hero. He just had to be patient.

“For our final takeaway today,” Amplifier continued, “there’s one final lesson we’d like you to take with you and remember as you go forward into the rest of your lives. That lesson is *pay it forward.* When you enrolled in this course, you were given an opportunity. An opportunity to have your criminal records wiped, yes, but also an opportunity to become a better person. You’ve learned a lot of concepts and gained a lot of skills, but you’re going to meet people in the world who don’t have that. It will help you maintain the progress you’ve made if you lift them up and help them become better as well.”

Katsuki wasn’t really sure he was qualified to help other people when he was just barely learning how not to be an asshole himself, but maybe eventually, when he was a pro, he’d find a way to do it. Not that most people would trust a guy who swore and hung out with villains to be a paragon of heroic morality, but he’d take what he could get if it meant saving the most people and being a true hero. He just had to get into UA first.

Shouto was still trying to convince himself that none of this was a dream. His father was well and truly gone, he and his siblings had inherited the house, and Natsuo was working on getting their mother released from the hospital. It was weird.

“I think we should sell it.” Natsuo said, blowing on his soup to cool it off.

Fuyumi sighed, “We can’t just sell our childhood home, Natsuo.”

“Why not?” Natsuo asked. “There’s nothing but bad memories here, and it’d be like one last giant fuck you to the old man!”

“He was our *father.”* Fuymi insisted. “I know he wasn’t the best,

but…”

“He was still a jerk.” Shouto said. “But I’m with Fuyumi on this one. If we sell the house, Touya wouldn’t be able to find us.”

“Not this again.” Natsuo groaned. “One talk with an informant and all of a sudden you’re a conspiracy theorist.”

“Well who else would know the things Kacchan knew *and* would care enough to ask if we were doing alright?” Shouto pointed out. “Touya obviously hired him to ask us so we wouldn’t recognize him.”

The other two hadn’t even believed the conversation had actually happened when Shouto had first told them. It was only when a detective showed up asking the exact same questions that kacchan had that they actually gave in and admitted that the conversation had to have happened, just like Shouto said it had. Shouto had asked the detective if he knew Kacchan and the detective’s shoulders had slumped and he’d looked dead inside, but he’d responded that the kid was an informant trying to weasel his way into the case. The look of realization in his siblings’ eyes had been extremely satisfying, but they still wouldn’t believe that their brother might be alive.

“Look, even if Touya *were* alive, which he’s not,” Natsuo said, “then why hasn’t he come to see us? Dad’s dead! There should be no reason for him to stay away if he’s alive.”

Shouto shrugged, “Maybe he’s shy?”

Fuyumi sighed, “Can we just drop it? And no, Natuso, I haven’t changed my mind about selling the house.”

“Whatever.” Natsuo pouted. “At this rate we’re not gonna sell it until Shouto graduates from UA.”

Shouto poked absently at his dinner. At least they’d let him keep his recommendation spot after Endeavor had been discredited. He didn’t know why they wouldn’t, but politics were funny like that sometimes. Still, he’d prove that he’d be a better hero than Endeavor ever could, not that his father had set the bar very high.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 03.02.2021

Robots

Chapter Summary

The entrance exam is finally here!!!

Chapter Notes

Can you believe that we've *finally* reached the entrance exam?! I can't beleive that the majority of this story takes place before the action of canon even gets going, but we're here! We're back into canon events, baby! Well...with some changes, of course!

Art!
Jaysaq
Moody
Logarbee
Toni the souper bee
Claire ;P
EmEm
Maya

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Denki looked at the huge building nervously. This was really it! He was really at UA! He was pretty sure that Izuku had been more nervous than he had been that morning, considering the insane number of good luck texts and last minute quirk tips that had ended up in his inbox overnight. He'd ended up sending an equal number of memes in response, which had actually done a pretty good job of calming both him and Izuku down, but now he was starting to feel that same anxiety again. What if he failed the written exam? Had he remembered to take his meds that morning? What if he accidently somehow went over his voltage limit halfway through the exam and ended up useless for the rest of it? What if the training he'd done with Izuku wasn't enough and he failed and disappointed his friend?!

Denki was so distracted by his spiraling thoughts that he didn't notice the girl walking in front of him until he'd run into her and was falling backwards onto his butt. Or, well, he thought he was, but then the girl reached for his hand and all of a sudden he was floating, which

freaked him out and he instinctively started sparking. What if he couldn't ground himself properly and his electricity went everywhere?!

"Oh! I'm so sorry for using my quirk on you without permission!" The girl panicked. "I just didn't think it would be a good omen to fall on the first day! I"m sorry!"

The girl looked really worried, so Denki smiled to try and hide his mini-freakout, "It's no big deal, I just wasn't expecting it! So...you've got a floaty quirk?"

Denki smiled a little more genuinely when the girl giggled, "Anti-gravity, actually, but yeah. I make things float."

"Well, that explains why I feel like I'm on cloud nine since I met you!" Denki winked. "Um...can you let me down now?"

"Oh! Right!"

The girl pressed her hands together and Denki felt his gravity return. He was able to stick the landing thanks to all the training he'd done with Izuku and he sighed in relief now that he was back on solid ground, "Thanks for save!"

"No problem!" The girl grinned. "I'm Uraraka!"

"Kaminari!" Denki started walking toward the school. "You nervous?"

"So nervous." Uraraka looked as overwhelmed as Denki felt as they walked up the steps. "Everything feels so surreal, you know? Today's gonna determine the rest of our lives!"

"Yeah," Denki grimaced playfully, "no pressure or anything!"

Uraraka laughed again, "Yeah. Good luck, Kaminari! Who knows, maybe we'll be in the same class!"

"I hope so, then I'll get to see your beautiful face everyday!" Kaminari grinned, then laughed awkwardly. "Sorry, I guess I flirt when I'm stressed. I can stop."

"I guess that's one way to cope! Don't worry about it!" Uraraka shook her head and looked out over the auditorium, completely lost, "Thanks for distracting me from test anxiety, though! Now, uh, do you know where we're supposed to sit?"

Katsuki kept to himself and tried to ignore the empty seat beside him as he waited for the presentation to start. He'd half-hoped that Izuku would still show up despite everything, but apparently that was just one more thing he'd ruined by being a cruel idiot. Izuku's absence, however, gave him an extra push of determination. He was one of the main reasons why Izuku had given up on his dream of being a hero, so Katsuki owed it to him to be the hero that he couldn't be. He had to be the best and pass the exam for Izuku.

He also had to pass the exam so that Amplifier and the other heroes would let him help find Ogawa. These past couple weeks had been hell, wondering if there was anything else he could do and getting all his information through Dabi and he threw himself even harder into his training. All of that waiting would be worth it once he got into the hero course, though, because if the heroes thought they could back out of their deal, then they had another thing coming.

Katsuki glared at the stage as Present Mic explained the practical exam. Robots. A concrete enemy that he could explode and kill. No worries about being too cruel or causing them too much pain. Just disable a hunk of metal and call it a day.

Katsuki grinned. It was time to be a hero.

Robots. Of all the things the entrance exam could have been, it had to be robots. Hitoshi half-heartedly wondered if he should just accept defeat and go home now. Yeah, he'd known that the exam was biased toward physical and destructive quirks, but he hadn't been expecting to *go into the exam practically quirkless!!!*

At least he wasn't completely useless. He'd been training his body for months now, ever since his run-in with that kid from Aldera. After that kid had saved him from getting beaten up, Hitoshi had started paying attention to the rumors about him. His name was Bakugo apparently, and he used to be a highly respected bully, but after that day in the alley, all the popular kids had started whispering about him going soft and getting involved with villains. Bakugo had only saved him one time, and it hadn't made things any better at school. Hitoshi was still getting beat up and silenced by both his teachers and his classmates, but every time they called him a villain, Hitoshi just repeated what Bakugo had said like a mantra in his head.

I've met real villains and you don't make the cut.

He'd started exercising more after that. Bakugo had been right. How

was he supposed to ever be a hero if he couldn't even fight back against his own bullies? It felt weird to take advice from someone who openly admitted that they were normally the one beating people up, but honestly, Hitoshi wasn't in a position to reject any help.

A couple of months of lifting weights could only do so much, however. Hitoshi had put on quite a bit of muscle, but he didn't have the money to join a dojo or anything, so basically the second that Present Mic mentioned robots, he knew he was screwed.

At least he still had the sports festival.

Denki could see Uraraka getting herself ready as they all lined up at the gates of the test city, but didn't go over to distract her. Instead, he tried to push his way as gently as possible toward the front of the crowd, Izuku's advice to use every possible advantage echoing in his mind. Robots were a good fit for him and wouldn't be too hard to defeat even if he hadn't learned way too much about robotics during one of his wikipedia deep dives.

He wasn't quite sure exactly when he had started hyperfixating on electricity, but the way that Izuku would listen to and encourage his rambling meant that he wasn't as ashamed of his special interest as he had always been in the past. His friends at school had always rolled their eyes when he talked about one topic too much and they didn't seem to have any problems convincing their brains to move onto another topic, so Denki would try to avoid whatever random thing he was obsessing about and get over the phase so that he didn't annoy people too much. Izuku, however, never thought it was weird when he spent an entire afternoon watching documentaries on tesla coils. If he thought Denki was getting too focused on one aspect of electricity, then he'd point his attention to something else that was related to it and open new doors for ideas and strategies that Denki would never have considered on his own.

For example, he never would have thought to study how electricity flowed in the body until Izuku suggested he learn how much electricity it would take to seriously injure or kill someone so that he could avoid that. The video he'd watched had mentioned that it was electrical impulses that made people's muscles move and carried pain signals to the brain. One thing led to another and Denki had somehow ended up reading research articles on electrostimulation therapy at three am on a school night until he had figured out more or less how to use small electric shocks to block those pain signals. And, well, if

Denki had practiced that particular skill to a science because his muscles were so sore every time he came home from training with Izuku, no one except him needed to know that.

“Go!”

Denki surged through the gates the moment he heard Present Mic’s voice, immediately zeroing in on the nearest robot and panicking slightly as it zeroed in on him as well. He rolled to the side to avoid one of it’s lasers and then ran as fast as he could to attack it before it could attack him again. He coated his hand with electricity right before he slapped the robot, careful not to overuse his electricity as he overloaded the robot’s circuits. Within seconds, the robot was smoking and Denki grinned as he took his hand off the dead robot and raced to the next one. It was kinda weird that no one else had started fighting it yet…

“What are you waiting for?!” Present Mic screamed. “Lightning boy has the right idea! There’s no countdowns in real life!!!”

Denki winced. Had he gone too early? No, Present Mic said the other examinees were just slow, but Denki would never have been able to win in a fight with Izuku if he hesitated before jumping in. He shook his head and electrocuted his current opponent. He could worry about being insecure later, for now, he had an exam to pass.

Katsuki exploded the head off the robot right as it was about to laser off some girl’s head, “Hey! Don’t let them corner you like that! Show them you’re in control!”

“Thanks for the save!” The girl shoved what looked like earphone jacks into one of the other robots, which exploded after a few seconds. “I just freaked when three of them cornered me at once.”

“Well get used to it.” Katsuki yelled. “Villains don’t fight fair.”

He exploded the third robot to smithereens and launched himself away. He’d be getting even more points if these stupid idiots could just pay attention. He’d already had to save three people from robots and four people from falling debris and they weren’t even halfway through the exam! How were people this stupid?! He couldn’t just let them get hurt, though, that wasn’t the kind of hero he wanted to be, so he just had work twice as hard whenever he wasn’t saving stupid idiots to make sure he got enough points to pass.

Katsuki let loose another explosion and the one pointer he was fighting shattered into a pile of bolts and scrap metal, “Die!!!”

Shinso panted as he swung the pole he’d found into another robot’s head. It wasn’t the most effective weapon, but his bruised knuckles were more than enough of a testament that it was at least better than straight up punching the metal. He’d learned the hard way that this pole wasn’t strong enough to take down the three pointers, though, so he was avoiding those, but that made it hard to keep up with everyone else. It seemed like every time he passed another examinee they were muttering point totals in the dozens or more while Hitoshi had only managed to take down three robots so far, two of which had only been worth one point.

It wasn’t fair, but then again, neither was his life, and Hitoshi was used to it, so he just grit his teeth and took another swing. One more point.

Denki had lost count of how many points he’d gotten a while ago, but he’d found a good rhythm and he was actually having a lot of fun! He’d spent most of his time destroying robots, obviously, but whenever he saw someone that was looking really tired he’d give them a mild shock to either wake them up or reduce the soreness in their muscles. The look of shock and gratitude on their faces always made him smile, even if he didn’t stick around long enough to let them thank him.

It didn’t seem like any time had passed at all, but despite his attempts to ration his electricity output, Denki could still feel himself getting closer to his limit. He probably only had a couple thousand volts left before he started losing brain cells, but that also had to mean that the test was going to end soon, so he wasn’t too worried...or at least he hadn’t been until the ground started rumbling and something blocked out the sun.

“Is that the zero pointer?!”

“That’s huge!”

“Annoying obstacle?! That thing’s bigger than the buildings!!!”

Denki started running in the opposite direction. There was no way he could face that and there also wasn’t any point if he wasn’t going to get any points out of it. He only stopped when he heard someone

crying for help. No one else seemed to have heard it, or else they were just ignoring it to save themselves, so Denki didn't have any choice but to go find whoever needed help.

It didn't take long until he spotted Uraraka trapped under a huge piece of rubble. He raced toward her, "Hey! Are you ok?"

"It's too heavy!" Uraraka looked almost green. "I'm at my limit! I can't make it float!"

"Um…" Kaminari looked around helplessly. The zero pointer was lumbering steadily forward and he had no idea how long it would take to reach them. "Where in your body does your limit affect?"

"My…" Uraraka gagged and grimaced. "My stomach."

"Well, uh, I'm not sure if this trick will work on nausea or not but…" Denki coated his hand in a tiny bit of electricity and put his hand on her ribs. "This is either gonna make things a little better or a lot worse. Sorry."

Uraraka almost flinched away at the shock, but after a moment, took a shaky breath, "O-oh. Ok...um I'm still nauseous, but um, I think it's better enough that I can try to lift this?"

Denki glanced back toward the zero pointer and his eyes widened as he realized how close the zero pointer was. Apparently he wasn't that great at judging distances, "Uh...you do that. I'm gonna try and stop the robot."

Urrara shouted something behind him, but he wasn't listening. All he could hear was his blood rushing in his ears as he ran *toward* the giant robot that was trying to kill them. He wasn't as good at parkour as Izuku was, but they'd gone over enough of the basics that Denki was able to use the surrounding buildings to make his way *onto* the robot, rather than beneath it. He looked toward Uraraka again, who was grimacing and gagging, but the rock that had been pinning her was floating a little, so that was a good sign. It still wouldn't be enough for them to get away, though. Denki needed to destroy the robot.

He placed his hand against the metal siding and pushed a little electricity into it. When nothing happened, he increased the voltage, but the robot just kept going. Denki hesitated briefly. He hadn't really gone all out since he'd started training with Izuku, even though he knew his limit had gone up a little through all the training. Now that he was focusing on being a close ranger fighter, he hadn't ever needed

to go over his voltage limit all at once. Why would he when low voltage attacks were more than enough to take down most human targets? This guy, though? Taking him down was going to take every last ounce of electricity he had left.

Good thing the exam was almost over.

Denki grimaced and hoped UA wouldn't judge him too harshly for whatever he did while his brain was fried, "Indiscriminate charge 1.3 million volts!"

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 03.04.2021

Opportunties

Chapter Summary

The fallout of the entrance exam

Chapter Notes

Art!
Hattie
The silver siren
Blood covered bee
Die_Sonne
Green Heron
Bee Happy

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shouta watched the exam in shock.

With how insistent Viridian was that he couldn't be a hero, the UA entrance exam was the last place he'd expected to find him and yet, he was currently watching a kid with an *extremely* distinct fighting style blow though robots like they were nothing. It was surreal, and Shouta really wanted to get his hopes up and run down to the field so that he could arrest the kid as soon as the exam was over, but he couldn't help the nagging realization that a few things just didn't match up.

First of all, Viridian was the type of person who always gave his all...or at least Shouta thought he was. However, even after ten months, Shouta had never once heard of him using an electricity quirk, even in fights where using a quirk like that could have made the difference between victory and failure. A few vigilantes chose to hide their quirks, of course, but those were usually planning on being vigilantes long-term and Viridian hadn't been in that mindset when he was first establishing himself. He'd been planning on dying within the first few months, so there was no reason for him to hide a quirk, even if it could have identified him. Which brought Shouta to his current question: if the kid he was watching take the exam really *was* Viridian, why had he completely ignored a powerful potential weapon that would have helped him fight and save people?

However, even if Shouta ignored the whole quirk inconsistency, things still didn't add up. He'd asked to see the file and this *Denki Kaminari* didn't look anything like his problem child. That could be explained away too, of course, by saying that he might know someone with a quirk that switched faces or changed someone's appearance, or even that he knew enough about makeup and cosplay to be able to pass for another person in the low light and high adrenaline environment that was nighttime heroics, but again, the only people who would think about disguising themselves like that were those that were capable of planning for the future. Viridian hadn't been planning on living long enough for being recognized to ever become a real problem.

Which left the obvious conclusion that this kid wasn't Viridian at all, but that somehow seemed the most illogical possibility that Shouta had considered yet. As far as Shouta knew, Viridian didn't have any formal combat training. He had learned to fight on the streets watching pro-heroes take down villains and then taking them down himself, so his fighting style was one of a kind and wasn't something that Shouta had ever seen anywhere else. It was completely unique to the problem child and it would stand to reason that the only person alive that would fight with a style identical to Viridian's was the vigilante himself.

The longer he watched the exam, however, the more Shouta had to begrudgingly admit that the fighting styles weren't exactly identical. Kaminari used many of the same moves and techniques that Viridian did, but he heavily incorporated electricity and he didn't use pipes or a slingshot, even though pipes would probably prove useful in the long run if he knew how to use them. Viridian moved the same way Kaminari did, but he relied primarily on weapons and improvised strategies instead of his quirk, which was why his file was full of theories about various mental quirks rather than something more combat oriented.

By the end of the exam, Shouta was still only about 50% sure that he'd actually found Viridian's civilian identity. He would need to actually confront the kid to be sure, but even though he tried telling himself that this whole situation was too good to be true, he couldn't help getting his hopes up. If this kid really *was* his problem child, this would be the perfect opportunity to get him off the streets, out of dangerous cases, and into therapy. It was almost too much to hope for.

When the final bell announced the end of the exam, Shouta cleared his throat, "I have a few questions for one of the examinees. Is there any

way we could ask Denki Kaminari to stick around for a few minutes?"

Mic chuckled and pointed at the screen, "It looks like he's not gonna have much of a choice if Recovery Girl has anything to say about it. It looks like he overused his quirk or something to stop that zero pointer there at the end."

Sure enough, when Shouta turned back to the screen, Kaminari was simply wandering around the fake city with a dazed, happy look on his face. The girl he'd saved, Uraraka, had hurried to help him down from the robot and was currently guiding him by the elbow to make sure that he didn't run into a wall or trip over any of the debris that was scattered throughout the city. Shouta made a note to ask Nedzu about adding a few more rescue points to her total, because even if the exam was technically over, the true mark of a hero was saving people even when no one was watching. Knowing the rat though, he was already taking that into account.

The whole situation was yet another strike against him being Viridian, though. There was a reason that Shouta had deemed him a *problem child,* after all, and he knew better than most that the kid often ran into fights he wasn't prepared for and pushed himself past his limits to win. And yet, with as many times as he would have sworn that Viridian was inches away from death, he'd never never seen the vigilante wandering around dazed like that even after the worst fights. The closest he'd ever come to that state as far as Shouta could remember was the time he'd gotten a concussion while fighting that crab villain.

"That move he did with the zero pointer was extremely impressive." All Might noted. "He took down a robot larger than most buildings with a single move, which shows not only power, but an extraordinary level of control. Is that why you're taking a special interest in him, Aizawa?"

Shouta shrugged, "I'm not taking a special interest in him. He's just got potential, that's all."

He didn't want to say anything about his suspicions until he was actually sure, but Shouta could tell that Nedzu had already put together the real reason why he was interested in the kid. It wasn't as if the rat was being subtle. Aizawa knew Nedzu was running the probabilities of them discovering Viridian's identity just by the mischievous twinkle in the rat's eyes as he passed Kaminari's open file over to All Might, who took it with interest.

Shouta scoffed and turned away. He needed more coffee. He didn't agree with Nedzu's decision to add All Might to the staff, but so far the man hadn't done anything to purposely piss him off. Despite his lack of teaching credentials, he seemed earnest enough, if a little clueless about how school and teaching actually worked. Shouta's biggest concern, however, wasn't All Might's teaching skills, even with how dismally insufficient they were. No, oddly enough, his biggest concern with All Might teaching at UA was his connection to All for One.

After Tsukauchi had let slip that All for One was the villain that had forced All Might into a pseudo-retirement, Nedzu had agreed to set up a meeting with all four of them so that Shouta could learn everything he knew about the symbol of evil. All Might had apologized profusely for misidentifying his nemesis as dead, which Shouta appreciated, even if it didn't do much good, but he hadn't been able to share much more about All for One's quirk than Viridian had uncovered.

What he *had* done was point Shouta in the direction of his old mentor, Gran Torino, who had been a little more knowledgeable about All for One's history if nothing else. If Shouta had to describe the old geezer, it would be as if someone had combined Shouta's logical ruses with Ms. Joke's prankster nature and given the result dementia. The fact that All Might seemed terrified of him was just the cherry on top.

He'd actually been having a very *odd* cup of tea with the geezer and picking his brain about All for One when Endeavor had decided to go on his rampage. He regretted not being there, but he stood by his decision to go and chase the lead. They had had no way of knowing when or where Endeavor would show up, so Shouta had decided to chase their most solid lead and hope that it would be enough to find the villain factory before things hit the fan. Obviously, it hadn't been enough. Endeavor had chosen the worst possible timing, especially considering that the heroes' main plan for dealing with a modified Endeavor was having Shouta erase his quirk. If Viridian hadn't come prepared with a plan that didn't use Erasure, there would most likely have been a lot more casualties that night.

Thankfully, it appeared the experiments weren't as far along as Viridian had feared, but information on All for One was lacking. Shouta felt like there was something All Might wasn't telling him. He'd hoped that Gran Torino would be a little more forthcoming, but there was no luck on that front either. Shouta couldn't even blame it on the fact that he'd had to rush out of their last meeting, because even though they'd had several follow-up phone calls since then, Gran

Torino still only shared the most basic information and seemed to be keeping something to himself. It was beyond frustrating.

He'd brought up his concerns with Nedzu, but the rat was as infuriatingly cryptic as ever and just told him to trust the symbol of peace. Shouta thought that was completely illogical, but there wasn't much he could do. Still, he hoped for everyone's sake that Viridian was wrong and All for One wasn't behind the villain factory after all, because it was one thing to have the *symbol of peace* come and impart his knowledge and experience to the next generation, but it was another thing completely to invite in someone with a dangerous nemesis into a school with children who couldn't defend themselves yet and risk painting a target on all of their backs.

Shouta groaned and stretched as he stood and started making his way down to Recovery Girl's office. He could deal with All for One and All Might's secrets later, for right now, he had to go meet the kid who was hopefully his vigilante problem child. At this point, he was just trying to take things one mystery at a time.

Katsuki didn't know how he was supposed to feel walking away from UA. He'd passed the exam, there was no way he hadn't, but the jealous and amazed looks that he wouldn't even have noticed ten months ago, now just irked him. He wasn't better than any of them, not really. Yeah, he had a strong quirk and he'd trained hard with it, but he'd made a lot of mistakes too, so who was he to take a spot that could have easily gone to any of them?

He shook his head and tried to ignore those feelings. There wasn't really anything he could do about it besides keep working hard and try to deserve his place, so there wasn't any point in worrying about it. He'd done his best and he knew that Ogawa would be insufferable about it if he was there, but the stupid ocotupus would have to settle for Katsuki saving his dumb ass, since he'd been stupid enough to go and get himself dissapeared. Katsuki tried not to wonder if Izuku would be proud of him too. If he hadn't been such a jerk, the nerd would have been able to be there himself.

Katsuki tried to ignore everyone as he made his way toward the gates, but just as he was walking through the courtyard, he noticed another examinee that looked familiar for some reason and it took Katsuki a few seconds to place him. The kid had purple hair and was tall and lanky, not that it was that noticeable with the way he was slouched, and he seemed to be absolutely pissed, which probably meant that he

hadn't gotten enough points to pass. It was the eyebags that gave him away though. It was hard to completely forget about the first kid he'd really *saved.*

"Hey!" Katsuki called out to him. "You're that one kid. I *told* you that you didn't have what it took to be a villain."

The kid turned around and glared at him, "Yeah, well, it looks like I don't have what it takes to be a hero either. Sure, I can try again at the sports festival, whatever, but what's the point when even the test is designed to make sure I fail?"

Katsuki ignored the glare. It was *his* default expression, so it was probably this kid's as well. Goodness knew how pissed off *he'd* be if he had to deal with people calling him villain everyday, "So you're just gonna give up? I don't know, that seems kinda weak."

"Like you would know." Eyebags turned and started walking away. "I heard what the other kids said about you, *Bakugo* . Explosions? Your quirk is abosolutely perfect for being a hero and destroying stupid robots to get points. You've never had to work a day in your life to get your dream, just because you were born lucky. You get to be a hero just by existing."

Katsuki silently fell into step beside him. A part of him wanted to tear into this kid...Shinso? Was he remembering the name right? Anyway, who did Shinso think he was to judge what Katsuki had and hadn't done? He'd worked hard for this dream, damnit!!!

Another part of him, however, knew that Shinso had a point. Katsuki had never been bullied or told he couldn't be a hero. His quirk *was* perfect and it had opened as more doors than it had closed. He couldn't possibly understand what Shinso had gone through his whole life, and how it felt to work that hard, only to fail at the moment when it truly mattered. But, still, that didn't give Shinso the right to discount everything Katsuki had done to get to where he was.

He was quiet for another long moment before he finally spoke, almost too quiet to be heard over the noise of the street as they left the gates behind, "...You don't go from being a bully to being a hero without a whole lot of work."

Shinso stopped and stared at him for a long moment as he processed that, but he obviously didn't know how to respond to it, because he ended up just shaking his head and falling into step beside Katsuki again. He couldn't blame him for not having thought of it like that.

Just like Katsuki had never been bullied, Shinso had never *been* a bully. He didn't know just how much Katsuki had had to fight to leave all that behind and be more than just another jerk whose quirk let him get away with anything. He'd never had to uproot everything he used to be to become who he *wanted* to be. There was a difference.

Wanting to get away from *that* sore subject, Katsuki looked Shinso up and down, "You've put on a little muscle since the last time I saw you, I'll give you that, but did you even think of learning how to fight?"

"My quirk…" Shinso started like that would explain everything, but Katsuki cut him off.

"Won't always be there for you." Katsuki said. "Even my *perfect quirk* has limitations, dumbass. I sweat nitroglycerin. What am I supposed to do in the cold, huh? If you really wanna be a hero you gotta know how to fight."

They were getting close to the train station and Katuski knew they'd be getting on different trains. He considered just leaving the kid now and never looking back. It wasn't like Shinso was Katsuki's responsibility or something. It was his own damn fault he'd failed the exam, he could have trained harder, but...Katsuki silently groaned. He could practically hear Amplifier's voice in his head, smugly reminding him of that stupid *final lesson* . Find a way to pass it on. If Ogawa were there, he'd probably take the stupid kid under his wing the same way he'd taken on Katsuki, wouldn't he?

Katsuki finally huffed, scribbled something on a receipt he'd dug out of his pocket and shoved it into Shinso's hand, "Meet me at this address at noon on Saturday. Don't you dare waste my time, got it?"

Shinso stared at the paper suspiciously, "What? What are you gonna do?"

"It's it obvious?" Katsuki put his hands in his pockets and stalked off, "I'm gonna teach you how to fight."

By the time Denki started feeling like himself again, pretty much everyone had already left the infirmary. Recovery Girl was doing some paperwork at her desk and Denki grimaced apologetically as he gathered his things that someone had obviously been nice enough to bring from the locker rooms, "Uh, thanks for taking care of me!"

"It's no problem, dearie." Recovery Girl said kindly. "It's my job to

make sure students here are kept safe, especially when they get quirk exhaustion."

"I hope I wasn't too much trouble." Denki laughed, "I can be a total idiot when I fry my brain like that, you know? I've had friends send me too many dumb recordings, so…"

"You mostly just babbled nonsense." A gruff voice said behind him. "But Present Mic does that when he's at full capacity, so I don't think you have anything to worry about."

Denki yelped and spun around. He hadn't known anyone else was still in here! Sure enough, however, there was a guy that looked like an annoyed hobo rubbing at his ears as he crawled out of a sleeping bag, "Seriously? Did you have to scream?"

"I, uh," Denki looked between the hobo and Recovery Girl, who didn't seem phased by his random appearance, "I'm sorry?"

"Don't tease the young man, Aizawa." Recovery Girl scolded. "Don't pay him any mind, dearie, he just enjoys scaring new students, but I suppose everyone needs a hobby."

Aizawa rolled his eyes and turned back to Denki "That's a nasty quirk drawback you've got."

"Uh, yeah…" Denki rubbed the back of his neck nervously. "I've been training different ways of fighting so I don't run into my limit, so I haven't actually fried my brain like that in a while. I'm alright, though! It's been happening since my quirk developed, so I'm totally used to it! It's like a natural high, right? Not that I do drugs or anything like that! Just, um, like from what I've seen on the internet, it's kinda similar?"

Denki smiled awkwardly as Aizawa gave an amused huff, "Well, you're going to have to keep training. Once you're a pro-hero, there won't always be people around to make sure you don't hurt yourself like there was today. You can't be a good hero if your plan is to make yourself a burden on your teammates. Now get going before your parents get worried."

"Yes sir!" Denki nodded frantically and bowed to Recovery Girl before running out of the infirmary. "Thanks again."

"Thank me by not getting injured again!" Recovery Girl yelled after him.

Recovery girl waited until the door swung closed behind Kaminari before turning back to Shouta, “It’s not him, is it?”

Shouta stared at the door the kid had just run out, “No. It’s not. Their personalities are too different and Viridian wouldn’t have been able to hide it if he recognized me. Not to mention the fact that I can’t sneak up on Viridian anymore. Kaminari’s situational awareness doesn’t even come close.”

He’d have to keep an eye on Kaminari, though. After talking to him, Shouta was fairly certain that he wasn’t a vigilante, but that didn’t mean he didn’t have some sort of connection to Viridian. With such a distinct fighting style, they had to at least have come in contact, and while Kaminari mentioned he’d been training, he hadn’t made any mention of what he’d been doing or who he’d been training with. Shouta could have pushed, maybe even could have asked who trained him, but without knowing their connection, he had to assume that whatever he asked Kaminari would eventually get back to Viridian and he couldn’t risk the problem child panicking and disappearing again. Still, though, even if Kaminari wasn’t Viridian, he might lead them to the kid who was or even convince the real Viridian to turn himself in willingly.

“There’s one other thing I think you should be aware of, Aizawa.” Recovery Girl said seriously. “I had multiple students across all exam sites complain that they were worried about getting stung by all the bees hanging about.”

Toshinori hid awkwardly in one of the side hallways as he waited for the student that Aizawa had pointed out to pass by on his way out. The two of them might have very different approaches to heroism, but despite Aizawa’s obvious dislike of him, Toshinori couldn’t help but respect the man’s opinion. He had an amazing reputation as a teacher and a good eye for potential, something that Toshinori, in his current predicament, wished was true for himself. Nedzu had told him to be patient and get to know the students before worrying too much about picking the right successor, but every scolding he got from Recovery Girl just reminded him that he was running out of time.

If Aizawa was taking an interest in a particular child, however, then there was a good chance that the boy had what it would take to become the next symbol of peace. Not that Toshinori was entirely relying on his coworker, of course! Young Kaminari’s performance in

the entrance exam had been more than enough to impress him on its own. He obviously had excellent control of a very powerful and dangerous quirk, which would hopefully make the transition to One for All much less painful than it could be, and he'd honed his body for combat, so the boy already had enough muscle that the quirk shouldn't blow his limbs off. Physically, the boy was exactly what he was looking for.

That wasn't what had impressed him the most, however. No, what had impressed Toshinori the most had been the way that Kaminari had obviously known that destroying the zero pointer would take him beyond his quirk's limits, but he'd done it anyway, just to save a fellow examinee. It was that dedication to save people no matter what that would make him a great hero and a perfect successor for One for All.

When he saw the distinct yellow and black hair rushing toward him down the hall, Toshinori grew into his muscle form and stepped out in front of him, making the young man fall on his rear end in surprise and shock.

"All Might?!"

Toshinori grinned, "I am here!"

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 03.06.2021

Quirk Theory

Chapter Summary

Quirk transfer is an interesting beast.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Hubris, Blood, and Soup
Soup

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Denki sat on Izuku's bed and let him ramble about a recent hero fight as he tried to ignore the anxiety that had been growing in his gut for the past three days. All Might's offer had come out of nowhere and he just couldn't shake the feeling that he didn't deserve it. Like seriously?! He'd just barely learned to control his own quirk, what had he done to deserve All Might's power too?! He felt like he'd fooled All Might somehow into thinking he was this great hero student with a lot of potential, so what would happen when he realized Denki was just average or even a little bit below? Would he take back his offer? Would he be mad? Would Denki still be able to be a hero if All Might hated him? Knowing that those questions were probably ridiculous didn't do anything to stop the thoughts, especially since he had absolutely nothing to compare this whole situation to.

In addition, Denki just couldn't stop staring at Izuku. If anyone deserved an awesome quirk like All Might's, it was him. He was a lot smarter than Denki was and he was a better fighter, so there was no doubt in his mind that Izuku would make a way better successor than he would. With everything that he knew about quirk theory, Izuku probably wouldn't have any problems learning how the quirk worked and if he had a quirk, there would be nothing holding him back from being one of the best heroes Japan had ever seen. It just seemed like it would be a really jerk move to accept All Might's offer when he already had a powerful quirk that he wouldn't even be able to control without Izuku's help.

Of course, that was only one of the reasons why Denki had told All

Might he needed time to think about his offer. He had been understanding, as expected of the number one hero, but he had seemed a little disappointed by Denki's hesitation. It was the offer of a lifetime, he *knew* that! It was just...a lot and Denki didn't know if it was even possible. He'd never heard of a quirk that could be transferred before. What if All Might was lying to him?

Denki jumped with a yelp as Izuku poked his cheek, "Hey, you've been spacing out more than usual today. It's not a bad thing! I just...you can lie down for a while or we can just watch tv or something."

"Um…" Denki gave a smile that he didn't feel was very convincing. "No, don't worry about it, it's nothing."

Izuku frowned and jumped onto the bed beside him, "Ok."

"Ok?" Denki narrowed his eyes suspiciously. "You're not gonna push?"

Izuku shrugged, "I have bad days where I don't really want to be pushed, so I figured I'd just be here for you? Sorry if that's awkward or not the right thing, I was just trying…"

"Your mom's at work, right?" Denki interrupted suddenly.

Izuku's eyes widened, "Um...yeah?"

Denki took a deep breath and hesitated. All Might had told him that he shouldn't tell anyone about One for All, but...Denki's brain had been racing in circles for days now and he still didn't know what to do. Maybe if he told just *one* person, it wouldn't be so bad? And it was just Izuku and Denki knew he could trust him! It wasn't as if All Might *had* to know…

But he'd promised All Might that he wouldn't tell! How could he be All Might's successor if their entire relationship was built on lies?! But he really did need advice and Izuku was looking at him expectantly now, so he couldn't just say nothing! Maybe he could talk around the issue? Like in those movies where they treated something as a hypothetical or something?

Yeah, that might work.

"Um…" Denki bit his lip nervously. "You know a lot about quirk theory, right?"

“I mean, I wouldn’t call myself an *expert.”* Izuku said. “But I’ve got a basic understanding of it. What does that have to do with Mom being at work.”

“Nothing.” Denki said quickly. “Nothing. I…it’s nothing. We can just drop it.”

Izuku’s eyes widened and it seemed like he was sympathy panicking right alongside Denki, “No, it’s fine! It doesn’t matter! Um…did you have a question about your quirk?”

“Not *mine.”* Not yet, anyway. “Just kinda in general. Uh…this is a really weird question, but do you know if it’s theoretically possible for someone to give somebody else a quirk?”

To Denki’s surprise, Izuku went stiff. He could practically see the thoughts and theories racing behind his forehead and it was almost a full minute before Izuku finally said anything, “…Why?”

“Just curious?” Denki shrugged and tried to quell the rising panic. He’d been expecting a ramble, or even a laugh and an assurance that it was impossible, not whatever this was. “I, uh, I must have read it somewhere. Like I said, it’s nothing, we can just drop it.”

“Denki, please, I need you to be completely honest with me.” Izuku grabbed his shoulders and looked at him intensely. His eyes were wide, and he looked scared, which was making Denki even more nervous. “Did somebody offer you a quirk?”

Ogawa was finally starting to get used to his new quirk, even if it was still strange. He felt like he was four all over again, getting to know his limits and discovering new aspects unexpectedly and often at inconvenient times. It would have been nostalgic if it wasn’t for the torture. It took everything he had to withstand the daily *training* that the doctor put him through and he could feel himself slowly caving in despite his best intentions. It would be *so much easier* to give up. He could just obey whatever the doctor and Sensei wanted him to do and he wouldn't’ have to worry about the pain or the punishments anymore. He could just *be.*

He always tried to bury those feelings whenever they came up, but they were just there in the background. That was bad enough, but then it was made even more complicated by the fact that the people living in his head seemed to disagree on the right course of action. Thankfully, Kumo’s theory of them integrating into him hadn’t been

entirely correct. They *had* kind of blended together, but he was still mostly *him,* which he couldn't be more grateful for. There were two of them, as far as he could tell, each with their own personality and shadowy shape in his mind. One of them seemed a little too eager to take the easy way out and the other was stubborn as hell, which meant that Ogawa was constantly stuck in the middle of the two when it came to giving in and just obeying his captors. It was starting to get really annoying.

Lately, though, he'd been siding a little more with the stubborn shadow. From what they had been able to put together, they were in unprecedented waters in terms of the experiments which meant that just like Ogawa didn't know his quirk's limits yet, neither did the doctor. He used pain to test those limits, because of course he did, but after the first week, Ogawa had started to perform just slightly under what he felt he could. The doctor was still delighted with the results and Ogawa took care to make sure he never suspected that they were hiding anything from him, but it also meant that he didn't know his own true limits, since he never had a moment when he wasn't being watched to test them.

Ogawa heard a clang as a door farther down the hall opened and he hurried to pretend to be asleep so he wouldn't be dragged off immediately for another session. He stayed still and controlled his breathing as he heard the sounds of the cell next door being opened and someone being thrown in. It was only once he was sure the doctor was gone that he dared open his eyes and gasped.

"Kumo?" Ogawa said in a horrified whisper, despite the fact that he knew his cellmate probably wasn't in any state to respond. "Is that you?"

Kumo's normally stark white hair had darkened to a bruised, blackened purple and the vapor was rapidly fluctuating out of control, sometimes covering almost his whole body and sometimes disappearing almost entirely. At the sound of Ogawa's voice, he groaned and rolled himself onto his side, opening his eyes to reveal a startling, glowing yellow that had Ogawa scrambling instinctively to get away.

"Guess what, Ogawa?" Kumo gave a weak smile and Ogawa could tell he was about to pass out. "I finally got friends of my own."

Izuku held his breath as he waited for Denki to answer. He'd thought

he was doing a good job at protecting him from his vigilante side, but if the villain factory had somehow found him...well, he figured that it was more likely that All for One or whoever the true leader was would simply steal his quirk rather than offer him a new one, but there was always the possibility that the villain factory was trying to recruit him.

His heart sunk when Denki chuckled awkwardly, “How did you know?”

Izuku’s heart sank. How had they found him?! He thought that he’d been at least somewhat careful with his identity. He didn’t go home if he felt like someone was following him and Eraserhead and the heroes hadn’t been able to figure it out yet, but if the villain factory hadn’t found him through Izuku, then how had they found him?

“Uh, Izuku?” Denki pulled him out of his thoughts. “Is that a bad thing? Because you look like you’re freaking out and it’s kinda making me freak out because you’re freaking out.”

Izuku wanted to laugh hysterically. Was it a bad thing?! Yes! Yes it was a very bad thing! It meant that the villains were targeting his best friend and putting him in danger! Izuku couldn’t just say that, though, because Denki was already starting to freak out and Izuku hadn’t even said anything. He deflated. At least if the villain factory was trying to recruit him, the heroes might be able to track whoever made contact and find the rest of the operation that way. It wasn’t much of a silver lining, but Izuku would at least try to be grateful.

“It’s dangerous.” Izuku said finally. “It’s theoretically possible, when someone has a quirk that allows it, but there are a lot of risks, and I’ve only ever seen evidence of it being done by villains.”

There. A simple explanation that left just enough to the imagination that Denki would be able to understand that it was a villain who approached him and he’d be able to adjust to that before they decided how they were supposed to move forward.

Izuku waited for the realization that he’d met a villain to set in, but it never did. Instead, Denki just frowned thoughtfully and muttered to himself, “Hmm, that’s weird, because it was definitely a hero who gave me the offer...”

Whatever Izuku’s train of thought had been, it completely jumped the rail, “What?”

Denki's eyes widened as he apparently realized he'd said that out loud, "Oops."

"Oops?" Izuku repeated frantically. "Oops?!"

If there was a hero with a transfer quirk, why weren't they involved with the villain factory investigation and how hadn't Izuku ever read about them anywhere? He'd spent years as the ultimate hero fanboy. He knew every pro hero's quirk in Japan and had written about most of them in his notebook, so he would have come across anything similar to All for One, but he hadn't, which meant that whatever hero had approached Denki was very good at hiding their quirk from the media, which meant that he was probably very good at hiding other things and probably shouldn't be trusted. If anything, the fact that it was a hero made Izuku even *more* concerned, if that were possible.

"He, uh, kinda swore me to secrecy?" Denki explained. "I wasn't supposed to say anything! I promised him that I wouldn't tell anyone because it's kinda a big deal and would probably get really bad if it got out and villains found out about it, but I've been thinking about it for three days and I still don't know what I'm supposed to tell him or if I'm supposed to accept because it's a really generous off…"

"You haven't accepted the quirk yet?" Izuku deflated in relief. "Ok, that's good. That's really good. We can work with that. Sorry, um...ok. Let's figure this out. It would be helpful to know...um, you said you can't tell me what hero gave you the offer, right?"

Denki shook his head sheepishly, "I wasn't even supposed to tell you. Again, there's the whole swearing to secrecy thing, but...I mean, you said there were risks? What are they? Al...the hero didn't say anything about any risks."

Izuku sighed and ran a hand through his hair as he turned to his computer, "I can show you some of the research that's been done, if you want. but I'm gonna warn you...it's not pretty. You know how when someone gets an organ transplant, there's a huge risk that the body will reject it?"

"Yeah, that's why they're always so careful to make sure the blood types and everything match." Denki nodded along. "So..when a new quirk is introduced, the body tries to reject it in the same way?"

"Exactly." Izuku said. "There's an acute autoimmune response because the body recognizes the new quirk as a foregn body, but because a quirk is so ingrained into someone's genetic code, it can't get rid of it.

The immune system has trouble targeting the correct part of the genetic code and that can cause the grey matter to atrophy in such a way that…"

Denki held up a hand, "Izuku, you know I love your mutterings, but I think you lost me somewhere in there. You gotta remember that I'm kinda stupid, so explain it like you'd explain it to an absolute idiot."

"You're not an idiot." Izuku huffed.

"Well, for the moment, pretend that I am." Denki gestured for him to continue. "Now, tell me again, but in stupid person language, what might happen if I accept this quirk?"

Izuku took a deep breath, "Your body could reject it and start attacking itself because it's hard to differentiate between what's *you* and what *not you.* It could turn your brain into swiss cheese and you'd die."

Denki's eyes widened, "Oh. That's...that's not good."

Izuku let out a crazed sounding chuckled, "No, that's not good. In the few cases where a quirkless individual receives a quirk later in life, they die within a few years, sometimes even less. Quirk transfer isn't generally good for a person's life expectancy."

"Why would All…It doesn't make sense, it doesn't seem like something he'd do!" " Denki groaned and flipped around so his face was buried in the mattress. He laid there for another long moment until he suddenly raised his head and looked at Izuku. "Wait, how long did you say those people lived after getting a quirk?"

Izuku tried to ignore the fact that twice now, Denki had started saying something that sounded suspiciously like *All for One,* "A few months to a few years, maybe a little longer if they were lucky."

Denki sat up, "Well that makes zero sense because All Might's been active for almost 40 years and he's still going strong when by your logic he should be long dead by now."

"Well I wouldn't say going strong, but I guess there *could* be some quirk that could counteract the negative..." Izuku started muttering, then stopped, eyes widening as the rest of his brain caught up. "Wait, *All Might?!* As in the symbol of peace, All Might?! *All Might* offered you a quirk?!"

Denki froze again, “Oops...”

Chapter End Notes

Alright, manga readers...no, I will most likely not be following canon in this aspect. I have fleshed out a lot of quirk theory for this story and have come up with my own ideas for how I want OfA and AfO to work in this story, so...meh, it's fanfiction, so we can get away with taking a couple of liberties and ignoring reality. Sorry, the real lore is probably better than the system I've come up with, but whatever, we're just gonna appreciate them for what they are: different stories with slightly different systems. Enjoy!

Next update: 03.08.2021

Letters

Chapter Summary

UA sends out acceptance letters.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Sheepy
Avroux
Ash
Another Obsessed Person
Greenie

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Oi! Katsuki! There’s a letter for ya!”

Katuski ignored his old hag’s excitement as he jumped down half the stairs and snatched the letter from her hand, “Give me that. It’s UA, right?”

“Of course it is, brat.” She scoffed proudly and cuffed him lightly over the head. “You better have gotten in!”

Katsuki rolled his eyes, “Obviously I got in, old hag! Now leave so I can have some peace and quiet while I open it.”

“If you want quiet, go to your room!”

“Fine!” Katsuki trudged up the stairs, envelope in hand, and slammed the door. It was finally here. The evidence that all his hard work had been worth it. If Ogawa wasn’t still missing, Katsuki probably would have gone to the beach and opened it with him and the others, but as much as he hated it, now that the weekly meetings were over, the group hadn’t really been hanging out as much. They tried, but Katsuki had been busy preparing for the entrance exam and the other two were busy trying to find better jobs now that their records were clean. They still texted occasionally and had hung out once or twice, and if Katsuki was ever just wandering around the underground, he was bound to run into them eventually, but without Ogawa to glue them

together, it was taking a lot more work to maintain the friendship. To make things even harder, even though none of them had never mentioned it, Katsuki could tell they all knew something was missing when they hung out, so the less that they saw each other, the less they had to remember what it used to be like.

Katsuki shook his head. He'd find him. He only hesitated slightly before tearing open the envelope. This was the moment of truth. Could he actually be a real hero?

Instead of the letter he had expected, a weird metal disk fell onto the desk with a loud clunk and it took Katsuki a second to realize it was a miniature holograph projector. A bright light shone out and when the image solidified, All Might was smiling at the camera, wearing some god awful yellow suit. It threw Katsuki for a moment until he remembered hearing a couple of rumors at Dabi's bar that All Might was gonna start teaching at UA. He'd thought the rumors were completely ridiculous, but now it looked like he owed a couple people apologies for laughing at them. Great.

"I am here!" All Might grinned. "As a projection!"

Katsuki rolled his eyes, "Obviously, dumbass. Now get to the point."

"The truth is that I didn't just come to this city to fight villains! I'm the newest UA faculty member!" All Might coughed slightly before continuing. "Katsuki Bakugo, you got an exemplary score on the written exam and tied for first in the practical! In addition, I've been told a few heroes even put in a good word for you!"

Katsuki knew what All Might was going to say, but he still found himself holding his breath in anticipation.

"Congratulations and welcome!" All Might gave the camera his signature grin. "This is your hero academia!"

"I got in." Queen Bee informed him. "With this host's quirk and the information you gave me on the robot's design and weak points, the exam was easy, but I kept to the middle of the pack, just like instructed."

"Perfect. Move forward with the next phase of our plan." All for One grinned widely and disconnected the call, letting Queen Bee get back to living her host's life. She was a bit more of a wallflower than Queen Bee naturally was, but the personality change had been apparently

accepted as the host turning over a new leaf and coming out of her shell. Not that he cared, of course, but it was a relief that she hadn't been discovered. That would have been inconvenient.

All for One finally felt in control again. After months of meddlesome interference from vigilantes and heroes, everything was finally going according to plan. The doctor had reported that their most recent experiments had taken nicely to the tangled quirks he'd given them, and so far neither had shown any sign of rejecting their new quirks. It was a shame that the multiple quirks had combined into what appeared to be a single quirk, but the result was far more powerful than a natural born quirk and it was worth the trade off if it meant that his pawns retained their mental faculties. He could always use the failures, the nomu, if he needed distinct quirks to make an impact.

To make things even better, his contacts within the police department had reported that his distraction had worked exactly as intended. Unfortunately, most of the investigation was taking place within a small handful of heroes, so he didn't know *exactly* what the police knew, but from what his contact had been able to glean, the investigation was currently under the impression that the villain factory was nowhere near their goal and had, in fact, regressed due to the fact that Endeavor had died so quickly. Everyone had been so caught up in mourning the former number two hero and what was left of his reputation that they didn't even consider the fact that his death might have been completely intentional. It would have been even better if Endeavor had actually managed to take care of that annoying vigilante before he burned out, but it wasn't as if a child would be enough to stop his grand plans from moving forward.

It was almost time to begin the next movement of his symphony and All for One couldn't be more excited.

"Izuku!" Denki didn't knock as he barged in the front door, hurriedly toeing off his shoes before running back to Izuku's room. As he passed the kitchen, he saw Midoriya-san shake her head, a small smile on her face. Denki gave her a quick grin before he continued running down the hall, finally throwing open the door to Izuku's room.

Izuku had apparently been about to open the door to let him in, but instead his eyes widened as Denki barreled into him, unable to stop his momentum in time to keep both of them from tumbling to the floor. Izuku groaned and rubbed his head as he tried to untangle their limbs, "Good to see you too, Denki, but *ow!* "

“Are you boys ok in there?” Midoirya-san yelled from the kitchen.

“Yeah, Mom, we’re fine!” Izuku called back. “Denki was just a little excited!”

“Sorry!” Denki added, smiling sheepishly as Izuku rolled his eyes. “But Izuku! My letter came!”

“From UA?!” Izuku rushed to sit up. “Did you open it already?!”

Denki nodded, “I tied for first place! Well, in the practical, but I did better in the written than I thought I would. I got in!”

Izuku grinned brightly and Denki felt his stomach flip slightly, “That’s amazing, Denki! I knew you could do it! You’re gonna be such an amazing hero!”

Denki blushed and pushed him over, which just made Izuku laugh, “Seriously though, first place in the practical?!”

“Well, tied for first, but still…” Denki grinned and did a fist pump. “I really didn’t think I was doing that well, but turns out there were rescue points or something? I mean, I wanna be a hero, right, so of course I was gonna help the other examinees and then there was that thing with the zero pointer at the end, even if I had to kinda fry my brain to beat it, sorry. But I got in!”

“I’m proud of you!” Izuku grinned. “Do you know who your teacher is gonna be?”

Denki shook his head, “Somebody named Aizawa? I think he might have been there while I was *whee’d out* after the exam , you know? That guy looked kinda like a hobo, though, so it might not be the same guy.”

Izuku frowned, “Aizawa...he might be underground, or maybe retired? I know the most heroes’ civilian names, but some of them can be hard to find…”

“Oh!” Denki interrupted. “All Might gave the acceptance letter! Or speech? It was a projection, so yeah! Apparently he’s gonna be teaching at UA next year, which explains why he was watching the entrance exam. It was kinda weird, especially because of the whole…” Denki sat up and pushed the door closed, lowering his voice to a whisper, “The whole One for All thing, you know?”

It had taken a little convincing and more than one pinky promise swearing him to secrecy to get Denki to open up and tell him the whole story, but knowing everything just gave Izuku even *more* questions. Was the injury that All Might had shown Izuku really the result of his quirk instead of a villain fight like he'd said? Was it his quirk that had actually done the damage? If not, then why hadn't his quirk attacked his body? Who had he gotten his quirk from? Had he gotten it from All for One? Was he working with All for One? There were so many questions that Izuku didn't know how to answer and he hated every bit of it. He didn't want to believe that All Might could be working with the villains, or even just associated with them, but he had to entertain the possibility to keep Denki safe.

Izuku grimaced, "Yeah...I'm sorry, that was probably really awkward. I've been doing some more research on it, but...if it turns out to be safe, are you leaning one way or the other?"

Denki sighed and dragged a hand down his face, "I don't know! I *want* to accept it, because All Might is amazing and it sounds really cool, assuming that it won't kill me, but...I just…" Denki groaned. "I still don't feel like I deserve it. There are so many better people…"

Izuku cuffed him over the head, "Stop that. You got first in the entrance exam!"

"I *tied* for first in the *practical* exam." Denki corrected. "But, like, you would be such a badass hero if you got One for All! If it turns out that it's safe, I kinda want to tell All Might to choose you instead, and then we would be able to be heroes together."

Izuku stopped for a moment, then shook his head, "My body isn't meant for a quirk, Denki. Even if One for All *is* somehow the exception and doesn't hurt the user, it will bond better to someone whose body already knows what a quirk is and how to use one. If he gave it to me, the quirk would probably just get rejected and even if it wasn't, I'd be starting all over again like a four year old. My body doesn't have any experience with quirks and isn't meant to. It's fine. I already know that I can't be a hero, and besides, All Might didn't choose me. He chose *you."*

"I guess." Denki frowned. "It's still just a lot of pressure. But, hey! I got into UA!"

"You did." Izuku grinned. "But don't take that as permission to stop training."

Denki smiled back, “Then I guess you better start pushing me harder.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 03.10.2021

Escape

Chapter Summary

Have fun!

Chapter Notes

Art!
JJ-jinkies
Sheepy
TsukauchiNaomasaismyHusband
[knife]
Die_Bienne
BlueSky
Honeybees for cats
EmEm

TikTok!
MootMunyer

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

More memes at end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

For once, everyone in Ogawa's head was in agreement. If nothing changed soon, they were going to break and there wouldn't be anything they could do about it. It didn't make it any easier that he couldn't really remember anything more than vague memories from further back than the past year or so and he was almost positive that Sensei was using some sort of brainwashing quirk based on the multiple times he hadn't even *wanted* to disobey. After who knew how long since he'd arrived in this nightmare, Ogawa could feel himself becoming more compliant and obeying half the orders the doctor gave him without a second thought. He almost laughed now when he remembered how afraid he had been of the shadows that shared his body now, and how worried he'd been that he would lose himself to them, when really he should have been terrified of all of them losing themselves completely and becoming exactly what the doctor wanted them to be.

As it was, even more than Kumo, the shadows were his support during

the long hours when the doctor stole him away for a *session.* Ogawa wouldn't necessarily call them *friends,* but they had grown closer and he wasn't afraid of them anymore, which was better than nothing. Maybe eventually, he'd actually get used to them. Or maybe the doctor would wipe the rest of his memories and he wouldn't ever remember having his head to himself.

From the short chats he was able to have with Kumo when both of them were lucid, they'd decided that the shadows must be what was left of the owners of the quirks that the experiments had mixed with theirs. Sensei's quirk seemed to be able to take quirks from one person and give them to another, and Ogawa figured it made sense for the shadows to be there. A person's quirk was such an important part of them that, when it was removed, a little of that person was torn out alongside it. He didn't really want to know what had happened to the *rest* of his shadows, and everyone in his head seemed to agree that considering what they'd gone through so far, it was probably better that they didn't ever try to find out.

But it explained why his quirk felt like a hand-me-down sweater that was just a few sizes too big. It was *like* his quirk, but it wasn't *entirely* his, so it felt weird and was hard to get used to. It didn't help that he couldn't completely explore his limits without showing his cards to his captors. His unknown quirk limits were his only hope if he ever wanted to get out of here.

Footsteps and the sound of something dragging echoed down the hall and it was only a moment before Kumo was tossed roughly into the cell next to him, unconscious with the black vapor of his new quirk fluctuating out of control. They still hadn't figured out what Kumo's new quirk did, but it must be pretty dangerous considering that they'd started wiping his memories of the experiments. They probably wanted him to be completely compliant before they allowed him to fully use and understand his quirk, but Ogawa thought that between the two of them, Kumo had a better chance of escaping.

"Come on then, your turn now." The doctor said, unlocking Ogawa's cell and kicking him lightly in the ribs so he couldn't pretend to be asleep. "And let's see if we can do it without fighting this time, eh?"

Ogawa slowly got to his feet and followed a few steps behind the doctor in feigned compliance. It was a new strategy that he'd been using for a few days now and one that he desperately hoped didn't backfire, but at this point, he was willing to try anything, even pretending to be the obedient little puppet they wanted him to be. The

doctor hummed happily as they made their way to the lab and Ogawa was careful not to show too much interest in any of the hallways they passed. He'd been down some of them for various experiments, and he was sure that some of the others were decoys, but he still noted every single one, just in case.

He resisted the overwhelming temptation to run. In these in-between moments, the doctor was carefully looking for any sign of disobedience or rebellion and he was far too familiar with the doctors toys to believe that he'd make it more than a few steps. No, he needed to wait for a time when the doctor was distracted if he expected to actually be able to fight back or escape.

"On the table please." The doctor said. Ogawa quickly laid down on the cold metal table, placing his wrists and ankles in their designated locations. The doctor fastened the retraining strap around his left ankle and was about to do the other when he glanced down and stopped before frantically patting his chest pocket, "Ugh, where did my good pen go? I swear it was just here!"

He started turning out the pockets of his lab coat, then started searching around the room. Ogawa held his breath. He was almost entirely unbound and the doctor was distracted. Now was his chance! The more timid of his two shadows yelled at him that it was too good to be true, while the bolder one screamed that this was probably the only chance he would ever get. It took less than a second for him to decide that it was worth the risk and stretch one of his tentacles down to unfasten the single strap the doctor had remembered to tighten before he'd gotten distracted.

It felt weird for Ogawa to stretch his tentacles farther than his neck, but the extra elasticity was completely comfortable for his more cautious shadow, so he tried to rely on that feeling instead as he clumsily undid the strap, keeping a close eye on the doctor as he yelled in triumph and held the lost pen above his head.

"Found it!" The doctor smiled and came back to the table, just barely missing when Ogawa's tentacle snapped back into place right as he turned around. "Now, where was I….? Ah, yes, I was just about to begin, wasn't I?"

Everyone in his head tensed in anticipation as the doctor turned around to grab something from his torture table. The doctor had made a mistake. He'd forgotten that he'd never finished strapping his subject down. Ogawa mentally ran through what he needed to do. *Take out*

the doctor. Get Kumo. Find the exit. He could do this, but he had to get it right, because they weren't going to get another chance.

The doctor turned back around, scalpel in hand, and leaned over Ogawa with a smile, "Sorry about the delay, let's get...aaah!"

Ogawa pounced. As quickly as he could, he wrapped tentacles around every one of the doctor's limbs and another over his mouth and nose, clamping his jaw shut so he couldn't scream for help. With his more confident shadow's encouragement, he tightened the tentacle around the doctor's wrist until he was forced to let go of the scalpel and Ogawa used another tentacle to retrieve it and throw it across the room. He glanced up at the camera in the corner. He needed to get out of here before back-up arrived.

The doctor let out a muffled scream as a thick black ink oozed from Ogawa's tentacles and started burning where it touched him. They had figured out that the ink he was able to produce now was kind of acid, but he had only ever shown the doctor the weakest concentration of it, even though his more assertive shadow felt confident that they could control the concentration. Thankfully, that instinct had been correct and, even though Ogawa had no idea how strong the ink he'd just produced was, it was enough that, when combined with the lack of air as his tentacles choked him, it took less than a minute for the doctor's eyes to roll back in his head as he passed out from the pain.

Ogawa tossed him across the room and immediately ran for the door, cursing when he realized it was locked. Instinctively, his tentacles reached towards the doctor and started searching his pockets. Ogawa almost dropped the key as soon as he found it, but after a brief fumble he was finally able to shove it in the lock and he sighed in relief as it clicked open. He didn't want to waste time running through the maze, so instead he stretched his tentacles out as far as they could go down every hall and used them to search for a breeze or any sensation to show that it might lead outside as he ran back toward the holding cells. He heard footsteps running down one of the halls toward him and panicked, running in the opposite direction of the sound, which unfortunately only got him completely lost. Ogawa whined in frustration. He didn't have time to get lost! He needed to find Kumo and get out!

He kept running, both of his shadows urging him on and encouraging him to run faster. He felt a patch of cold air on one of his tentacles and immediately followed it. Nothing looked familiar and he had no idea if his holding cell was close or halfway across the facility at this

point, but he could hear yells behind him and realized he couldn't afford to search for it. He followed the breeze as far as it went, then had to stop to avoid running face first into a brick wall.

It was a dead end.

The breeze was coming from a window near the ceiling, but it was way too small for him to crawl through. Ogawa whirled around, but his stomach sank and he knew he was screwed. If the doctor found him, they would wipe all the memories he had left and he'd probably be tortured as punishment, but there wasn't anything he could do. There wasn't enough time to backtrack and find another path and there definitely wasn't any way he was going to be able to find Kumo so they could escape together. Ogawa cut off that train of thought. If Kumo was in his situation, he'd want him to focus on saving himself and leave him behind. He couldn't afford to worry about anyone else right now, not when he was so close and yet so far from tasting freedom. In desperation, he reached out to his confident shadow.

How strong do you think we can make that ink?

It wasn't *words* that he felt in return, just a weird feeling of confidence, like they were excited to rise to the challenge, but it was enough to make Ogawa let out a crazed laugh as he spread his tentacles across the wall behind him and the strongest ink he could possibly create oozed from his skin. The sounds of whoever was chasing him got louder and he caught a brief glance of literal *monsters,* most likely the doctors other experiments, turning the final corner before the wall behind him suddenly gave way and he found himself scraping past the rough edges of the ruined brick as he tumbled out onto the street.

The smell of fresh air for the first time in almost a month was enough to make him freeze. He was out! He'd made it! He was finally free!

A sharp pain on his calf brutally reminded him not to get ahead of himself. He looked down and screamed when he saw one of the monsters biting him with multiple rows of teeth. He stretched out his tentacles and strangled what he thought was the monster's neck, adding a medium-strong ink and squeezing until the thing finally stopped biting him.

Ogawa gave a final kick to the monster's face and scrambled to his feet, not waiting to see if the monster was still awake or even still alive as he launched himself blindly down the alley and onto the

street. He didn't pay any attention to where he was going, only able to process the unconscious urging from both himself and his shadows to *run, hide, get as far away from that hellhole as possible.*

The bite on his leg was starting to burn and his heart started to race as he realized that that monster must have had some kind of venom and he had no idea what it did. He pushed through the pain and the weird cloudy feeling that was starting to take over his brain as he kept running, wiping tears from his eyes as he left the lab and his cellmate behind. He pushed himself past his limits, trying to put as much distance as he could between him and that hellhole as he ran toward the beginnings of the first sunset he'd seen in months.

"I'm sorry, Kumo…" Ogawa's voice cracked from stress and dehydration as he pushed himself even faster, running to escape both the fading footsteps of his pursuers and his own guilty relief. "I'll…I'll come back for you. I…I have to. I won't leave you there. I…I'll be your hero, I promise."

Chapter End Notes

Memes!
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Next Update: 03.12.2021

One for All

Chapter Summary

> While someone else is making their escape across the city, Izuku is busy investigating a mysterious quirk.

Chapter Notes

> Art!
> Eeveelseevil
> XXJoshOwoXx X X X
> Caws
>
> Memes!
> X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku took a deep breath and reminded himself for the fifteenth time that he did not have to do this. He could go and find a crime to stop or he could do some investigation online. Heck, he could even just go home and go to sleep! He did not have to confront the number one hero.

As much as he didn't want to, however, there was a certain aspect of nostalgia to the whole thing. The last time he'd asked the number one hero an important question, it had been more of a spur of the moment thing and a lot more of a personal question rather than an interrogation, but Izuku just hoped that this time, the answer would be a little more positive.

He shook his head and focused on staying silent and keeping to the shadows that the first rays of sunset were creating. Normally he wouldn't go out as Viridian this early, but he didn't want to lose his chance and he figured this counted as an exception. If he had asked, Eraserhead would have probably been willing to have this conversation for him, but from what Denki had told him, All Might wanted to keep the knowledge of his quirk as close to the chest as possible. Looping in Eraserhead might get both Denki and Izuku in trouble and even if All Might was a lot weaker than he had been at his prime, Izuku still didn't really want to be on his bad side if at all possible.

So instead, Izuku had hacked into the city camera system again and

checked the streets around All Might's last fight until he caught sight of his skinny form. In the end, he'd basically stalked the number one hero until he knew his basic schedule and could engineer a meet-up. He probably should have waited longer and gotten more information, but if the sheer amount of new articles today with All Might in the headline were any indication, he'd already reached his time limit, so there wasn't really going to be a better time for Izuku to talk to him without immediately getting beaten into the ground. It was better to get his answers sooner anyway, so that Denki could get back to All Might with his decision as soon as possible...or so that he could tell the heroes about All Mights true colors if he turned out to be working with All for One, but he was trying to ignore that possibility.

He hadn't told Denki what he was planning to do, for obvious reasons. With everything he had had going on, first with preparing for the UA entrance exam and now with the decision he needed to make about All Might's quirk, he seemed to have forgotten about his momentary suspicions about Viridian's identity and Izuku wanted to keep it that way. Thankfully, Denki assumed he knew so much about quirk transfer because of his quirk theory classes and not because he'd been researching to help the heroes with a case, so Izuku had said he wanted to do a little more research, he let Denki assume that he was reading a few more articles instead of kind of not really stalking a hero.

All Might turned onto a side street and Izuku took a deep breath. It had been ten months since he'd talked to the number one hero. There was no way he'd remember a weak little quirkless kid after all that time and he'd already gone over his limit, so as long as Izuku was careful, his identity should be safe. He pushed the memories of their last encounter and the last of his nerves under a thick layer of bravado and jumped down onto the street.

//

Something was off, but Toshinori couldn't quite put a finger on what. If he was in his muscle form, he would have assumed that he was being followed, but no one ever paid attention to Toshinori Yagi except to give him dirty glances when they assumed he was a drug addict or something. Tsukauchi would probably want him to call, just to be on the safe side, but he was the number one hero! He couldn't bother his friend just because of a little paranoia, especially when he was so busy with the villain factory case, so Toshinori just wrote the feeling off as him being tired after a long day of hero work and went home.

He should have listened to his gut.

He was just getting out his key to enter his building when he heard a soft thud behind him, “Hello All Might.”

Toshinori immediately swung around, fists raised as he tried to reach for the last dregs of his quirk, swearing slightly as he realized that there wasn’t enough to keep him transformed for more than a few seconds. He *really* should have called Tsukauchi.

His opponent easily dodged his less than superhuman punch and held up his hands appeasingly, “Don’t panic! And you don’t have to try to activate your quirk, I know you’re exhausted. I just want to ask you a few questions!”

That didn’t make Toshinori any less tense. In fact, it made him even more worried. He narrowed his eyes and almost immediately widened them again as he finally took the time to actually *see* who he was fighting. It was somewhat difficult, as the boy seemed to be careful to keep to the shadows and had a hood pulled over his head and what appeared to be goggles hiding his eyes, but his height gave away his age, at least. How did a child know about his true form and his time limit?!

After a few moments without being attacked, the boy straightened, still keeping his hands up in front of him, “I, uh, I’m sorry to corner you at home like this. I…there were probably better ways, but, um, I’m Viridian! Sorry, I probably should have led with that…”

The kid smiled awkwardly and Toshinori felt himself relaxing slightly, “You’re the vigilante that Tsukauchi is trying to catch.”

It didn’t answer how the kid knew about his weakness, but if Tsukauchi had complained more than once that the kid was always digging into things that he shouldn’t, and he seemed to have a good reputation among the local heroes, so he shouldn’t pose a threat, at least not immediately.

“If Tsukauchi is the detective that Eraser works with, then yes.” Viridian grimaced slightly and Toshinori couldn’t help the nagging feeling that he’d seen the boy somewhere before. “Um…I actually wanted to talk to you about one of the cases I’m…well, I can’t say I’m really *assisting* on it, because it’s not like they actually gave me permission, but, um, I’ve been helping out where I can and I have a few questions.”

“I’m not assigned to that case.” Toshinori said slowly. “Which you should already know, considering your involvement. Why not ask Eraserhead or some of the other heroes? You have a good relationship with them, correct? I’m sure they’d be willing to give you information on the case if you asked.”

“Heh, about that…” Viridian rubbed the back of his neck, “I, uh, don’t think the police know? I mean, I could tell them, but I don’t think you’d want that! I mean, unless the other heroes already know about your quirk, which I mean, might make more sense, but somehow I don’t think that’s the case…”

Viridian trailed off into a muttering storm that Toshinori couldn’t even catch half of, not that he was overly focused on what the boy said after *your quirk.* Toshinori must have heard that wrong because there was no way this boy knew about One for All. Perhaps if his successor…? Toshinori shook his head. No, young Kaminari wouldn’t have told anyone and even if he had, it would have been a friend, not a local vigilante that he knew nothing about. The boy must have found out through the same method that he used to discover the time limit, or there was always the likely possibility that he was simply pretending to know more than he did and hoping to bait Toshinori into giving something away like the reporters always did. Toshinori relaxed a little bit more. That was probably it.

“My quirk, my boy?” Toshinori laughed. “I’m lucky to have such strength, but I don't think it’ll help you in your case. A little too much brawn and too little brain, am I right?”

“That’s what I’m worried about…” The boy muttered, almost too quiet to hear. “Do you have someplace more private that we can talk? Maybe the roof? I don’t want to talk about One for All right out on the street like this.”

Toshinori froze. Well, that cut off the best case scenario. He forced a smile, knowing it wasn’t nearly as comforting as it would have been in his muscle form, “Of course, my boy. Why don’t you come upstairs and I can make us some tea.”

Viridian gave him a disappointed stare that he must have learned from Aizawa, “I’m a vigilante, All Might. I’m not going to let you corner me in an enclosed space when I know there are heroes that want to arrest me.”

“Of course.” Toshinori gave a strangled chuckle. Just who was this

kid?! “Then I’ll meet you on the roof in a few minutes.”

The boy nodded and within seconds he had disappeared up the side of one of the buildings. Toshinori stared after him in shock for a few moments, feet stuck to the floor until he pried them up and entered his building. He pulled out his phone in the elevator and immediately dialed Tsukauchi. Better late than never, he supposed.

It only rang twice before the detective picked up, “Toshinori? I heard you had a busy day, How are you doing?”

Toshinori cleared his throat, “Actually, um...I was calling to ask you about something. That vigilante you’ve talked about, Viridian. He has a talent for finding information he shouldn’t have any way of knowing, correct?”

“Unfortunately.” Tsukauchi groaned. “Kid’s nosed his way into the villain factory case and it was actually *his* research that led us to believe All for One might not be as dead as we thought he was. Why?”

“The boy showed up at my home.” Toshinori said, voice straining as the elevator approached the top floor. “He knew not only about my time limit, but my quirk as well. You don’t suppose…?”

There was a long moment of silence and then Tsukauchi sighed heavily, “He must have come across some hint while researching the legends surrounding All for One and put the rest of the pieces together somehow. I’m so sorry, if I’d known…”

“It’s fine.” Toshinori cut him off quickly as the elevator doors beeped open. “He’s waiting for me on the roof. He said that he had some questions for me.”

“I’m on my way.” Tsukauchi said. “I’ll bring Nedzu as well, since he already knows about your quirk and wants to get his hands on Viridian anyway. Wait for us.”

Toshinori shook his head, “If I take too long to show up, he might get suspicious and leave. I need to know what he knows. You trust him, correct?”

“I don’t know, Toshinori.” Tsukauchi sounded frustrated. “He does good work and wants to save people, but he also refuses to go into the vigilante rehabilitation program, which, honestly, is probably a huge red flag, so I don’t know.”

Toshinori swallowed thickly. He'd been hoping for some sort of assurance, but...well, it wasn't as if he had much of a choice anyway, "It's alright. I'll see you soon."

"I know this is like talking to a brick wall, but be careful." Tsukauchi said. "Good luck."

Toshinori hung up and gathered his courage before climbing the final set of stairs to the roof. He pushed open the door to see Viridian already waiting for him in the fading light of sunset and he was hit with the oddest sense of deja-vu. Had he already...Toshinori shook his head. He didn't have time to worry about the weird things the human brain did right now. He needed the information that Viridian apparently had and the reverse seemed to be true as well, so that exchange needed to be his main focus, at least until back-up arrived.

"Are you ok?" Viridian looked genuinely concerned. "When I suggested the roof, I wasn't really thinking about how hard stairs must be with only one lung…"

Toshinori stifferened slightly at the casual reminder of how much the boy knew about him, "Weren't you here for information?"

"Oh, right." Viridian pulled out a notebook from his toolbelt. "Um...your quirk, One for All is transferable and you're looking for a successor, correct?"

Toshinori spat up a mouthful of blood, "How do you know all this? Where are you getting your information?"

"Um…" Viridian hesitated. "Here and there? Don't worry, I'm not going to tell anyone!"

"These are extremely dangerous secrets, young man." Toshinori said sternly. "Outside of the obvious security risk, knowing them makes you a target for very dangerous villains!"

"Like All for One, right?" Viridian asked. "What is your connection to him? You aren't working for him, are you?"

"We're enemies." Toshinori glared at the boy, wishing that he could just activate his quirk and spirit him away to the police station. "I had believed that he was dead after a fight over five years ago."

Viridian nodded, "Then he was the one who gave you your injuries. Did he give you your quirk too?"

It took a few minutes for Toshinori to stop coughing after that and when he finally managed it, Viridian was awkwardly hovering above him like he wanted to help, but didn't know how. Toshinori groaned and pocketed his ruined handkerchief, "Where in the blazes did you get *that* idea?! I would never have accepted a quirk from that villain!"

"I didn't mean to offend you!" Viridian waved his hands frantically in denial. "It's just that All for One is the only person I've found in my research that has a quirk that allows transfer. Not to say there can't be others, but with the names of the quirks, it's obvious that there's *some* kind of connection and if you *had* gotten it from All for One, then that could be really important in understanding the villain factory case and…"

"I didn't receive my quirk from All for One." Toshinori interrupted firmly. "I received it from my mentor, *a hero."*

"O-ok." Viridian nodded with wide eyes. "I'm…it's just…if you didn't get it from him, then why are the names so similar?"

"One for All is a sacred responsibility that has been passed down from *hero* to *hero* for generations, young man." Toshinori drew himself up to his full height, ignoring the twinge in his back as his body protested the movement. "From it's creation, it has had one purpose: defeating All for One."

The boy scribbled something down in his notebook, "That explains the name, but…I know it's a hero's quirk, I'm not saying anything against that! But you said from it's creation…"

Viridian looked so earnest that Toshinori couldn't help sighing in defeat and collapsing onto the wall, letting some of the tension leave him as he finally sat down. It appeared that the boy was intent on getting the information he required and nothing that he said was going to dissuade him. No wonder Nedzu was so interested in the boy.

"They're brother quirks." Toshinori explained. "Back at the dawn of quirks, All for One had a quirkless brother, or one who they *thought* was quirkless. When All for One forced a stockpiling quirk into him, it combined with the useless quirk that was hidden in his DNA and created One for All."

"A stockpiling quirk that can be passed on." Viridian noted something down and started muttering to himself again. "That might explain the longer life expectancy, or maybe it has something to do with the quirk All Might was born with? There wasn't any information on it, but it's

possible that's a factor of why the quirk hasn't destroyed his body yet, but would that be passed on to the next holder?"

Toshinori couldn't decide whether or not he was grateful that he'd forced himself to pay attention to the muttering this time, "One for All is a lot of power, but I trained to prepare my body for it so it wouldn't blow my limbs off. The only risk to the holder's health is All for One himself coming after them."

The boy looked at him for long enough that if Toshiori had been a lesser man, he would have started to fidget under his stare and when he spoke again, it was soft and sounded almost like pity, "Are you sure?"

Toshinori raised one eyebrow, "It's my quirk."

"Of course!" Viridian nodded, but the frown didn't leave his face as he sat down beside him. "But quirk transfer is really dangerous, you know? I'm sure you're already aware, but in every other case I've found, the body eventually rejects the quirk and ends up destroying itself in the process. I'm just worried that will happen to your successor...or even to you."

"I…" Toshinori paused. Had Nana ever told him about those risks when she'd passed the quirk on to him? He couldn't remember ever hearing anything about it, but when she'd been alive, he'd admittedly been more focused on training and becoming a hero, so she could have said something and he just hadn't been paying attention because he didn't know how soon All for One would rip them apart. What if young Kaminari accepted his offer, only for the quirk to destroy him? Would Toshinori be able to live with himself if that happened?

"It's what's been happening in the Berserkers." Viridian continued, his voice kind as he waited for Toshinori to process everything. "The quirk is more powerful, but it slowly destroys the person's body and mind until there's nothing left. If One for All really doesn't hurt you, it might have a factor from the original holder that makes the body think the quirk is natural...or it might simply slow the process and since all the past holders have all been heroes, they might not have lived long enough for the effects to become noticeable. Either way, the villain factory is probably trying to imitate it with their experiments."

"Oh…" Toshinori's mouth felt dry despite all the blood he'd spit up over the course of the conversation. "So what now?"

Viridian shrugged, "I don't know. Obviously, you might want to get

some better security, because if All for One were to steal your quirk…"

"One for All can't be stolen." Toshinori corrected quickly. "It can only be passed on willingly."

"Well that's a relief." Viridian gave a sad smile. "But you should still be careful. Also…"

The boy trailed off like there was something he wanted to say, but didn't know if it was appropriate and Toshinori couldn't help feeling a little frustrated. With all the boundaries Viridian had crossed, he didn't have a right to stop right when he was about to say something that might be helpful. Because, as unorthodox as this entire situation was, it was clear that he knew what he was talking about. He had gained the trust of multiple pro-heroes, including the ever-prickly Aizawa, so despite his reservations, Toshinori would trust him as well, if only enough to listen to what he had to say. Anything more than that was still up in the air.

"Spit it out, my boy." Toshinori tried to be encouraging, but the kid still flinched in the tense atmosphere. "Also what?"

"I want you to get a brainscan before passing it on!"

Toshinori's eyes widened in surprise, but he found himself nodding after only a moment, "That would be enough to confirm whether my quirk is protecting me or destroying me, correct?"

Viridian nodded sheepishly, "Yeah...it's just...if it turns out that One for All *does* destroy the holder...maybe you would consider not passing it on?"

"I…" Toshinori took a deep breath. "I will think about it."

"I guess that's all I can ask…" Viridian stood and gave him a sad smile. "If it's not too much to ask, I'd like to know the results. I, uh, well, it's research and also...I just want to make sure your successor is ok."

Toshinori was about to respond, but before he could, Viridian tensed and whipped his head around to stare at the door to the roof. Toshinori didn't even have time to figure out what must have spooked Viridian before the boy was jumping onto the next rooftop and disappearing into the shadows like they were a second home. By the time the door opened completely, the only sign the vigilante had been

there at all was Toshinori staring after him.

“Ugh, he’s gone, isn’t he?” Tsukauchi sighed and rubbed the bridge of his nose. “So much for opening the door quietly and not spooking him.”

“He probably would have run the moment we showed ourselves anyway.” Nedzu padded softly onto the roof, frowning in disappointment. “It *is* curious that he is so opposed to being captured despite the fact that we have made it clear that he will be helped instead of punished, but if the boy insists on running, then that is his prerogative. It’s a pity I won’t be able to invite him to tea, though.”

“Did he at least tell you how he got his information?” Tsukauchi asked.

“No. He simply said it was because he was a vigilante.” Toshinori said numbly. “But I think I might need to see Recovery Girl.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 03.14.2021

Confrontation

Chapter Summary

The threads are coming together.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Sheepy
Hollis X X
reaction to life
Caws X

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

The cashier had looked at him weirdly when he'd bought two ice cream cones for himself, but he'd just glared at her and paid without any explanation. He wasn't sure there *was* an explanation, honestly. How was he supposed to say out loud that he'd seen in some stupid scene in a movie where the characters were celebrating some stupid event that only made sense as part of the plot and poured a beer on the ground for their freind who'd died. Ogawa wasn't dead, hopefully, but he wasn't there either, and Katsuki couldn't drink, so he figured ice cream would have to do.

The sun was already starting to set by the time he reached the beach. It was still as full of trash as ever, but considering it was the last place they hung out, Katsuki thought it was as good a place as any to do his stupid little fake celebration. It was messy and imperfect and would need a lot of work to make it anywhere near decent, but that described Katsuki too, so he thought it was ironically fitting or some shit.

"I got in." Katsuki muttered, there was no point in raising his voice when he was talking to someone who wasn't even there. He felt a little ridiculous leaning over the railing with an ice cream cone dripping in each hand, but he shook his head and forced himself to push through it. "I'm gonna be a great fucking hero, even with all the mistakes I've made, and you'd better be proud of me, got it? Now that I'm a hero in training, I'm gonna find the bastards that took you and

make them pay so that no one else gets hurt. I'm gonna get you back, I promise."

Izuku tried to calm his breathing and keep himself from having a panic attack as he ran home across the rooftops. He had just basically threatened the number one hero! That was so stupid! If All Might had had any more strength or any real connection to All for One, Izuku could have died! Why had he done that? A quieter part of himself, however, was almost proud. He'd done what it took to keep his friend safe and that was what was important, no matter who he had to fight to make it happen. Yeah, it might not have been the *smartest* thing to do, but deep down, Izuku knew it was the right one.

He wasn't planning on doing any more vigilante work tonight, but once the screams started, Izuku knew he really didn't have a choice. After what had happened with Endeavor, he knew it was too much to hope for just a purse snatcher, and his heart still sunk when he caught sight of the monster that was currently tearing its way down the street. The monster's main body wasn't that large, but the tentacles sprouting from its head spread all the way across the street. Dozens of tendrils reached out and wrapped around cars, walls, and mailboxes. Anything that was in the monster's path was tossed them aside almost like it was nothing, leaving panicked civilians to crawl out of their ruined cars and run in every direction. Some of the cars had lines of a smoking black goop smeared across them where the tentacles had been and Izuku made a note to avoid the substance as it slowly ate through the metal. Overall, the street was in absolute chaos and from his place on the roof, Izuku could almost imagine the crazed look in the berserker's eyes as he raged below.

But somehow, he couldn't there were some things about this monster that didn't really match up with the other berserkers that Izuku had fought in the past. For one, while it was definitely destroying everything in it's path, it wasn't going after *people,* just the buildings and cars that were in his way and it seemed like he had a destination in mind. It wasn't unheard of for berserkers to have a goal that they obsessed over, Endeavor had been a prime example of that, but this one didn't actually seem obsessed or angry, just determined and almost desperate. If it wasn't for the fact that the quirk was far too powerful to have not undergone any modification, Izuku would have thought the villain factory was taking a step backward and going back to making instant villains.

Izuku was about to jump down and attack when he hesitated. He had

promises that he needed to keep, and he couldn't do that if he made himself a target and got himself killed. He'd made a big exception to fight Endeavor, but it had been just that: an exception. Even then, he wouldn't have stood a chance against the former number two hero if he hadn't had an entire team of heroes backing him up. Izuku was used to fighting at a disadvantage, it was how he walked into every single fight, but Berserkers were more powerful than standard villains and he didn't even have a quirk to fight back with. If he went down there with zero backup and tried to fight a villain this powerful, he might not be lucky enough to make it out.

Izuku couldn't let that happen.

Thankfully, the tentacle monster still wasn't going after *people*. The only people Izuku could see that were really in danger were the people in cars, but even then, most people had realized that by this point and had abandoned their cars and just started running. Izuku could focus on evacuation and tracking the berserker's path to relay it to the heroes. The last time he'd had a fight like this, Izuku had ended up hacking into the hero comms from a random computer, but the rose berserker had been staying put, not moving like this one was. He needed to be able to keep up with the monster and stationary computer wouldn't let him do that. It really was too bad that Izuku had no chance at becoming a real hero, because it would have been a lot less annoying if he just had his own comm set and could call the heroes through the network without having to hack in.

After a moment, Izuku decided he'd just have to figure out the communication problems as he went. He jumped into an alley between two buildings and made sure that there was a clear exit on the other end before running out onto the street and using one of his marbles to hit a nearby street sign. There was a sharp *ting* as it hit and the nearby civilians swiveled around to investigate the odd noise. Izuku didn't hesitate to gesture for them to follow him, "This way! Hurry!"

Everyone nearby gave one last glance back at the berserker before running toward Izuku at full tilt. Izuku stepped to the side to allow them to run into the alley, "Go to the end of this alley! There's an exit to the next street between the dumpsters!"

Some of them nodded gratefully as they passed, while others were too rushed to even give him a second glance. When pretty much everyone had gotten off the street, Izuku grabbed the arm of a girl with red hair pulled into a single ponytail on the side of her head. He really wished

he had time to analyze her quirk, but he needed to focus right now on keeping everyone safe, “Hey, uh, do you have your phone?”

“Yes, I do…” She looked at him curiously. “Wait, aren’t you that Viridian vigilante?”

“Yep, that’s me.” Izuku gave a shaky smile and looked back to make sure the last stragglers were headed his way. “Um, could you do me a favor? Can you maybe call the police and then tell them that the villain is most likely headed south? And tell them to close off the roads intersecting this one, the monster’s attacking anything on the street.”

“Of course!” The girl pulled out her phone and looked up at him skeptically, “But, um, why can’t you tell them yourself?”

“No time.” Izuku grimaced. “I need to focus on tracking the monster and getting people off the street so no one gets hurt.”

The girl nodded and began dialing as she followed what was left of the crowd through the alley, but Izuku didn’t really pay attention after that as he waited for everyone nearby to get off the street. Once the street was empty, he climbed the nearest fire escape and watched the tentacle villain carefully. If he could try to predict which direction the monster was going to go next, he could evacuate that area and stay out of the villain’s sight as much as possible, all while keeping one step ahead. It might not be the post straightforward plan and it definitely came with its own set of risks, but it was significantly safer than his usual plan of making himself a target. Izuku hadn’t forgotten when Mom had dragged him out to visit her coworker and their daughter Tsu had criticized that strategy. It had made him feel terrible at the time, but he had had to admit that she had a point. When he made himself a target, he had to focus on keeping the villains attention and couldn't really help evacuate civilians effectively, so while it was still a valid strategy for when he needed it, it would probably be best to not have it as his go-to plan.

Izuku headed in the direction that the berserker looked most frequently and dropped down in an alley a little ways down the street. His last plan had seemed to work fairly well, so Izuku loaded up another marble and caught the attention of everyone who was panicking so he could lead them to safety. Once most of the people were off the streets, he assigned one of the more level-headed civilians to call the police with an update on the berserker’s movements and Izuku himself moved on right as the tentacle monster reached the

section of street he had just evacuated. It was a weird approach, but Izuku hoped Eraser would be proud of him for trying to save people without putting himself in danger...or well, at least not more danger than necessary.

Shouta was going to kill that kid. If Viridian would just let them help him, then he could actually get his own comm link instead of sending irregular updates through escaping civilians. It would cut out the middleman and be so much more effective, but no, the kid had to be stubborn and keep doing things illegally. It was completely illogical.

“The villain has just started heading east.” Tsukauchi informed him as he ran toward the fight. “Viridian seems to be doing a good job of evacuating his path, and we’ve sent cops to stop traffic, plus we’ve got a few other heroes that are on their way to help. Do you have eyes on the villain, Eraser?”

“Not yet.” Shouta grit his teeth. He could hear the commotion and sometimes he could see where the monster was if it happened to stretch its tentacles above the height of the surrounding buildings, but he was still a few minutes out from being able to cancel the bastard’s quirk and put an end to the fight. Shouta pushed himself to run a little faster. He wasn’t going to let Viridian fight another Berserker on his own.

Ogawa needed to find Bakugo.

He was the only person that Ogawa knew that might be able to teach him how to be a hero and save Kumo. Amplifier could be helpful as well, but she was, like, an *actual* hero, so she’d just look at him weird and try to say that he should leave the saving to the pros, but the pros didn’t know what it was like there! They had no way of knowing what life was like in the labs, weeks upon weeks stuck just waiting and trying to ignore the pain until the next time the doctor came to poke and prod at them. They had no idea what it was like to wake up with other people in their heads and discover that their quirk had fundamentally changed. They didn’t know how quickly Kumo was going to lose himself if Ogawa didn’t save him!

But he didn’t know how to be a hero. He was just a stupid, normal guy who had made a lot of mistakes and had zero idea of what it meant to be a hero, but Bakugo did! He’d made mistakes just like Ogawa had, but he was going to be a hero and save people, so he’d be able to help Ogawa be a hero so he could storm the labs and rescue his friend. He

needed to find Bakugo, but where?! He'd last seen him at the beach, right? Maybe he was still there? How long had it been?

Ogawa growled and rubbed his head as he used his tentacles to drag himself farther down the street. He knew he wasn't thinking clearly. He had enough adrenaline in his system that he could barely feel the bite in his leg anymore, but he was still vaguely aware that whatever venom the monster had was making him angry and desperate. It was a weirdly familiar feeling, but he wasn't thinking clearly enough to worry about when he'd felt this way before. For now, the only thing his mind was latching onto was finding Bakugo so they could save Kumo.

Anything that was in the way of that goal had to be ripped to the ground.

"Eraserhead." Tsukauchi's voice echoed over his comm link. "Viridian just sent an update. The villain is headed toward Dagobah beach."

"What do you mean the experiment escaped?!"

The doctor whimpered, but All for One didn't do anything to comfort him. The only reason he wasn't dead already was because he was still the best qualified pawn to train their most recent experiments and the nomu, not that he seemed to be doing stellar job of that at the moment.

"I gave you access to all of our failed experiments, the nomu." All for One's voice was dangerously quiet. "And you're telling me that not one of them was able to apprehend the subject before he left the building?!"

"I-I sent the nomu after him as soon as I was able to, Sensei, I swear!" The doctor rasped, gripping at the painful-looking burns on his arms. "But the acid ink aspect of his quirk was more powerful than we had anticipated! One of the nomu *did* manage to expose him to the venom quirk we used to contaminate the trigger for the instant villains, but I knew you didn't want to show your hand too early by releasing the Nomu, so I called them back when the subject left the building..."

All for One cut off the doctor's excuses with a glare, "You are correct. I *do not* want to show my hand too early. And what do you think will happen if the heroes get their hands on that experiment? All of that work with Endeavor to convince them that our experiments are just

beginning will have been for nothing! Get out my sight!”

The doctor flinched and bowed deeply several times before leaving All for One alone. This was far from ideal. Sure, he had always planned to use Shirakumo as Tomura’s perfect assistant, but that didn’t mean that he hadn’t been planning on putting their test run to good use. Having him escape now was like having a vital instrument break moments before the curtain rose for the opening number!

And to make it worse, their subject’s *training* was painfully incomplete. Yes, All for One had already managed to anchor the various brainwashing and persuasion quirks in the subject’s brain, but their hold was still weak and easily overridden by any strong emotion such as the panic of escaping the labs. Even if All for One were to order him to come back via those quirks, the subject probably wouldn’t even register the order, much less obey it!

But, the show must go on. All for One forced himself to take a deep breath. What was the worst case scenario and how could they avoid it? If the heroes were able to capture the subject and interrogate him, they would easily be able to find the doctor’s base of operations and, by extension, their other experiments. They could always move the labs to another location, All for one had no lack of different properties to choose from, but there was enough sensitive machinery that such an endeavor would take time. It would move quicker if they could rely on Warp Gate, but the new quirk was still untested and they had only just begun Shirakumo’s *training,* so there was no guarantee that he would obey the doctor’s orders especially considering how quickly their test run had gone off the rails the second he sensed an opening. No, using Warp Gate might be faster, but it was still too risky to rely on that quirk and its holder this early in the process.

All for One sighed heavily and picked up his phone. It was irksome, but the best move was most likely to cut ties with the escaped subject as soon as possible. The heroes were blinded by their own prejudices, so even if they managed to get their hands on the body, they wouldn’t think to look for multiple quirks in an autopsy. The only person who might suspect All for One was All Might, but the holder of One for All was utterly convinced that his old nemesis had been dead for years. It wasn’t ideal, but at least if the subject was terminated, the information lost would be minimal and it would give All for One time to move their operations and perfect the behavior of Tomura’s assistant before they had to face the heroes.

The phone rang a few times before the girl picked up, “Hello?”

“Queen Bee, I have a mission for you.” All for One rubbed the scar where the bridge of his nose had once been. “What poisons can your hive administer on short notice?”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 03.16.2021

Reunited

Chapter Summary

Old friends come together again.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Sheepy
A True Gentlebee
Greenie
Avroux X X
Chromagia
Kappa
lublylubster
unhealthily obsessed X
Haruuu
Coppery Copper X
xXJoshOwoXx X
Phoenix
Tsukauchismyhusband X
Rae
Caws X

A drawing challenge went around the discord!

Memes at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

It was a quiet night, almost peaceful with the way that the last rays of sunset reflected off the ocean, and Katsuki would have even called it *photogenic* if it weren't for the trash everywhere. It wasn't like he was here for the aesthetic though, so Katsuki didn't really care. He let himself get lost in his thoughts as the ice cream cones melted in his hands. It was kinda nice, but whatever weird semblance of peace Katsuki had found shattered when he heard a loud crash behind him. He spun around and both ice cream cones immediately fell to the concrete as he stared in shock in shock at what was happening on the street behind him.

The crash he'd heard was a bus being literally *thrown* across the street and into one of the adjacent buildings. People were screaming,

obviously, but there weren't nearly as many civilians running around as Katsuki would have expected. What rooted him to the floor, however, was the *thing* that was currently tearing it's way down the street. At first glance, Katsuki swore that there was no way it could even be human. Inky black tentacles stretched out in every direction and wrapped around everything they could reach and with the way the thing was backlit from the streetlamps that had just turned on, it looked like someone had brought some eldritch horror to life.

Katsuki gulped and started backing away slowly. The last thing he wanted was to get on this monster's bad side, especially since he didn't have permission to use his quirk to fight back. He needed to get to safety and make sure the heroes knew what was going on, then he could worry about what the heck that *thing* was. It was a fairly decent plan, or would have been if the monster hadn't chosen that moment to stare straight at him. Katsuki froze and held his breath, hoping that maybe this was a t-rex sort of situation and the *thing* wouldn't be able to see him if he didn't move a muscle. For a split second, it almost seemed like his deprate strategy was going to work.

Then the monster charged.

Katsuki leapt down onto the beach as fast as he could, weaving his way into the maze of garbage and focusing on disappearing. His heartbeat echoed in his ears, but still didn't do anything to drown out the crashing sound of the garbage towers collapsing as the monster chased him. He almost stumbled as he slid around a corner, but managed to scramble to his feet and keep making his way around the maze.

"Shit, shit, shit!" Katsuki hissed. "Gotta go faster…"

Izuku turned away from the old man he was helping just in time to see the berserker disappear into the massive piles of garbage that covered the beach and he sighed in relief. No one ever went down onto that beach, so he didn't have to worry about the monster hurting anyone. Still, unless the berserker was trying to destroy pollution, it was eventually going to realize that whatever it was looking for wasn't there and Izuku needed to make sure that everyone had already evacuated by the time that happened.

He was on his way to another building when Eraserhead dropped down in front of him looking pissed, "Problem child, just what do you think you're doing?"

“Actually staying away from the main fight for one, Eraser.” Izuku smiled. “You’d be proud.”

Eraserhead sighed tiredly, “Situation?”

Izuku pointed to the beach, “I’m pretty sure it’s a berserker. It’s got some kind of octopus quirk, from what I can tell. I don’t know how far the tentacles can stretch, they’re pretty elastic, but I would avoid them if possible. They secrete some kind of ink, which is why I think it’s an octopus quirk not just tentacles, but it’s pretty corrosive and I’m not sure your quirk will cancel the effects of it, just the villain’s ability to secrete it.”

Eraser nodded as he took note of Izuku’s analysis, “Any idea what it’s after?”

Izuku shook his head, “Just that it keeps destroying everything in its path, but doesn’t seem to be interested in hurting people like the other berserkers were. That might change when it gets bored of the beach though.”

“Alright.” Eraser looked down toward the beach. “Amplifier and Rock Lock will be here soon, so keep focusing on evacuation and we’ll take care of the Berserker.”

“Now that you’re here, I can…” Izuku tried, but Eraser just held up a hand.

“No, you said it yourself, it’s going to get bored of the beach and we can’t have civilians in danger when that happens.” Eraser pointed out. “Also, you’re actively staying out of danger for once, and I’m not not gonna do anything to interfere with that.”

Izuku pouted, but nodded, “Just yell if you need any help, ok?”

Eraser ruffled his hair, “Will do, kid. Stay safe.”

Izuku flashed a wide grin, “Do I ever?”

Katsuki stumbled again. He really needed to go running in the sand more apparently, because his legs were starting to burn and the monster behind him wasn’t showing any signs of slowing down. He was just pulling himself up when one of the tentacles reached for him. Katsuki’s eyes widened as he realized he wasn’t going to be able to dodge in time. He braced himself for the inevitable, only to be

grabbed by fabric instead.

He was pulled behind a fridge and Eraserhead didn't loosen his capture weapon as he glared down at him, "What are you doing here, Bakugo? I thought you were going to stay out of this case."

"Only until I got into UA." Katsuki argued. "But for your information, I was not seeking out this villain *at all.* I was just hanging on the beach, then this fucking monster started chasing me!"

Eraserhead looked at him skeptically, "Viridian said the berserker wasn't going after people."

"Well then Viridian was wrong." Katsuki snapped. "Because...look out!"

He and Eraserhead rolled in opposite directions and both barely managed to get out of the way before one of the trash towers came toppling down where they'd been. Katsuki didn't look behind him to see if the monster was following before he started running, but the crashes behind him were more than enough to paint a pretty good picture of how screwed he was.

He heard someone scream and then there was an even bigger crash. Katsuki looked back and saw Amplifier in a battle stance, obviously having used her quirk to knock over one of the trash piles onto the monster and buy them a little bit of time. She didn't relax at all as she stared where the monster had been, only looking away to give katsuki a once over and make sure he wasn't injured, "Are you ok, Kacchan?"

Katsuki braced his hands on his knees and tried to catch his breath, "What the fuck? What even is that thing?!"

"A bio-engineered superweapon." Eraserhead flanked his other side. "Or at least the villain factory's best attempt at one."

Katsuki took one last gulp of air and straightened, "So...kinda what happened to Endeavor?"

Amplifier nodded, "Yeah. Pretty much."

"Great." Katsuki drawled. "So we're screwed?"

"We've beat these things before." Eraserhead said. "And Rock Lock's on his way. Viridian is also in the area, but if he's willing to stay away, I'm not going to complain. The fewer kids we can have

throwing themselves into life threatening situations, the better, even if they are my future students."

Katsuki grit his teeth, "Didn't seek this out hobo."

"We can argue about this later." Amplifier yelled. "We've got company."

Katsuki flexed his hands as the junk in front of them started to shift, but Eraser stopped him with a glare, "Absolutely not. Run. That's an order!"

Katsuki glared at him, "But…"

"This is a real villain, Kacchan." Eraser said firmly. "You have zero combat training and even less experience. Find Viridian and help with evacuation if you want to be involved, but *this is not your fight.* Got it? Don't make me expel you before you even start UA."

Katsuki scowled and considered disobeying and charging at the monster, just to spite him. The old him would have done it. The Katsuki of ten months ago wouldn't have even hesitated to leap into the fight, but he wasn't that person anymore. He couldn't jump into fights without thinking just because he wanted to beat something up, and he couldn't just disobey a direct order from a pro-hero, not if he wanted to keep his place in the hero course and be the hero he actually needed to be.

He only hesitated for one more second before growling and turning tail. He heard Amplifier shout a warning and Erasrhead grunted as something crashed behind him, but Katsuki forced himself not to look over his shoulder as he raced through the maze as quickly as he could. He passed Rock Lock as he arrived, but didn't spare anything more than a nod to introduce himself as he ran. As much as Katsuki hated it, as long as he wasn't allowed to use his quirk and fight, he was dead weight and the faster he got off the beach, the faster the heroes could do their job without worrying about him or other idiot extras getting hurt in the crossfire. He pushed himself a little faster. He was going to be a hero. He'd save people soon enough.

Izuku helped another civilian down a set of stairs and handed them off to the police, who had finally arrived a few minutes ago. They were halfway through creating a police line, so Izuku wasn't too worried about anyone except maybe a few intrepid reporters wandering into the evacuated area. The noises from the beach were getting louder

and closer, so Izuku worked twice as hard to make sure everyone was safe. It was weird being on this side of the fight. He knew that heroes had different specializations, for example Eraserhead focused on villain takedown while heroes like Thirteen focused more on rescue, but Izuku hadn't really come into this whole vigilante thing with a *plan,* so he'd just ended up doing whatever was necessary to keep people safe and usually that was either fighting or intelligence gathering. He'd never really just taken a fight to focus on rescue before.

It was...bittersweet. On the one hand, he was saving people, which was the point, and every grateful person and even the ungrateful people gave him one more reason to keep going and was one more example of how he wasn't completely useless, but on the other, it brought up too many painful memories of long nights anchored in front of a computer screen watching All Might's debut on repeat. Izuku sighed to himself and pulled a civilian from one of the cars the berserker had overturned. He was probably just more sensitive to nostalgia because of his conversation with All Might earlier. It was like a bruise that was just a little more tender than everything else, but nothing that he needed to worry about too much.

Still, he couldn't help his mind from wandering and wondering if All Might would be here helping with rescue if he hadn't gotten his injury. Maybe if things had been different and All Might hadn't been injured and Izuku had gotten a quirk, they would be working side by side to keep people safe instead of having to budget time and use loopholes to help people. Izuku shook his head and forced himself to focus. Being a hero wasn't in the cards for him, but being a vigilante was better than he ever could have realistically expected, so he had no right to be sad. He was helping people and being useful and that was what was important.

Izuku threw himself into the rescue work. He was happy with what he had. He just had to keep going. He ran toward another overturned car and squinted as it suddenly got a little darker. Sure, the sun had pretty much set, but the streetlamps had turned on a while ago, and they were a consistent brightness so why…He glanced upward and his eyes widened behind his goggles as he took in the massive swarm of bees hovering around the streetlamps and blocking out part of the light.

Queen Bee had joined the fight.

Shouta lept around to avoid both the tentacles and the ink trails they

left behind, all while trying not to get tetanus. Maybe he should suggest a training ground based on this place and make the students think on their feet while traversing unpredictable obstacles. Nedzu would probably love the idea of making the kids run constantly changing mazes like this, if they could figure out how it would work from a liability standpoint, but Shouta could deal with that later. For now, he had to deal with a berserker who was not only *physically* powerful, but mentally as well, at least in comparison to the ones they'd rought in the past. The monster was able to strategize, at least roughly, and had even successfully managed a feint earlier where it had pretended to be trying to wrap around Amplifier to distract her from the tentacles that were grabbing a refrigerator. If Shouta hadn't activated his quirk when he had and temporarily immobilized the tentacles, it probably would have even managed to throw the thing and Amplifier would have been a smear on the pavement...well, on the sand.

Which was another inconvenient sign that this berserker was actually capable of thought. Sometime during the fight, it had apparently put together that Shouta was responsible for the long seconds when the tentacles stopped moving and had logically decided to throw sand in his eyes and use the brief moments when he binked to tear away his goggles. Everytime Shotua got close, he found another handful of sand being flung in his face. It was getting really frustrating.

Oh, and to make it worse, it was targeting his student. Classes hadn't even started yet! He wasn't paid enough for this.

"Get out of my way." The monster snarled. "Bakugo…"

"No!" Amplifier yelled, dealing another blow to one of the tentacles. "He's just a kid! I won't let you touch him!"

The monster snarled again and wrapped its tentacles around the nearest trash mound, pulling objects out from the base and throwing them at the heroes as the rest of the pile came crashing to the ground. Seriously, between Amplifier and all the crashes, this fight was almost louder than fighting with Mic…

Rock Lock sprinted out from one of the paths between the garbage, "What's going on? How can I help?"

"It's after one of our informants!" Amplifier yelled. "Immobilize the tentacles! As many as you can!"

Rock Lock nodded in confirmation and dashed for the nearest tentacle.

The monster simply tried to swipe him away like a fly, but the moment Rock Lock made contact, he smirked and the tentacle was frozen in midair, “Let’s see how you deal with that!”

The monster howled and tossed Rock Lock away with a tentacle around his ankle, but Rock Lock was able to immobilize that tentacle as well before he went flying. Shouta almost sighed in relief, at least now the fight would stay within a small radius and they wouldn’t have to worry about the fight getting back onto the street. Now that the monster was basically captive, it shouldn’t take too long to take it the rest of the way down.

He should have known better than to jinx it.

“Don't have time for this…” The monster slurred it’s words as it spoke, but it sounded more like the drunks Shouta arrested occasionally rather than the stilted way berserkers tried to talk as their brains forgot how to. “Bakugou…”

“Is long gone.” Shouta snapped. “We’re not going to let you hurt him!”

The monster turned and Shouta only had a split second to see the sheer anger in its eyes before he found himself flinching away from another wave of sand. Amplifier and Rock Lock both yelled and it was only after a few seconds when he’d wiped the sand from his face that he remembered what else Viridian had warned him about.

They had no idea how far those tentacles could stretch.

Katsuki only slipped a few times as he raced toward the street, scrambling around every twist and turn as he tried to ignore the crashes behind him. He didn’t know a whole lot about berserkers and all the weird experiments the villain factory he did, but from what he’d seen on the news, every time there was a suspiciously powerful villain like this one, they had caused destruction until someone showed up to fight them, then focused on the person trying to stop them. So even though he knew he was probably just being paranoid, it was both frustrating and concerning that this weirdo monster seemed to still be following him. Shouldn’t it have given up by now?

He could see the street now and raced toward it in relief. It was almost completely dark now and it was starting to get hard to see obstacles clearly on the beach, so if he could at least get to the streetlamps…

Katsuki heard another crash behind him, closer this time. He instinctively looked over his shoulder and immediately wished he hadn't. The black of the monster's tentacles blended in with the gathering darkness and made it look even bigger than it was. It looked like something from a horror movie and Katsuki could hardly even tell where the monster's body ended and the tentacles began. Of course, he just had to play into the dumb blond tropes as the universe chose that moment to make him trip over a broken toaster that he'd missed in the dark and he went tumbling to the ground. He ended up on his butt and scrambled backwards away from the monster as the heroes finally caught up.

"So much for immobilizing it." Rock Lock panted. "Eraser!"

"On it." Eraser growled and the tentacles stopped writhing for a second as Rock Lock hurried around to do who knew what and Amplifier started attacking the monster's body.

"Get outta here Kacchan!" Amplifier ordered. "Just run and don't look back!"

Kacchan scrambled to his feet and started running again, intending to obey the order, but then the monster screamed. It was a loud, ugly sound, but that wasn't what made Katsuki freeze in place. No, what made Katsuki freeze and whip around was the fact that he recognized the voice.

"Bakugo!" Ogawa screamed. "Kacchan! Help!"

Chapter End Notes

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

Next Update: 03.18.2021

Drowning

Chapter Summary

The beach fight conclusion.

Chapter Notes

Art!
TuskauchiNaomasaismyhusband X X X X X
GreenHeron
AnotherObsessedPerson
SplashColor
TheCatLeader
Avroux
Caws
Microo

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki's eyes widened in horror and time seemed to slow down as he took in the scene in front of him. Rock Lock had finally managed to immobilize about half his tentacles and the others hung uselessly as Eraser took his quirk. Amplifier was wrestling with him as she tried to force his arms behind his back, and Katsuki expected to see rage and murder in the monster's eyes, considering how violently he'd been chasing him just a couple seconds before.

Instead, to him, his friend just looked broken.

He'd changed way too much. Katsuki swallowed down a gag as he filled in the blanks about what Ogawa must have been going through to make that big of a difference to his body and quirk. Katsuki felt tears at the corners of his eyes. He'd failed him. He hadn't been good enough to save him and instead, Ogawa had gone through hell and saved himself. He'd chased after Katsuk to try and find some semblance of safety after his world had been practically destroyed, just like Izuku had all those years ago.

And Katsuki hadn't even recognized him.

Amplifier raised her fist to give a final blow and Katsuki finally

managed to shake himself from his thoughts, “Stop!”

His shout was enough to make her hesitate and she turned to him with shock that quickly morphed into anger as he started running towards them, “Kacchan! What are you doing?! I told you to run away!”

“Fuck that!” Katsuki snapped. “Don’t you recognize him? Think about it for two seconds! Who do you know that has a tentacle quirk and got disappeared by the goddamn villain factory?!”

“Recognize…” Amplifier’s face wrinkled in confusion for a moment before dropping in horror. “But...but his quirk isn’t...he can’t stretch...and the ink!”

Katsuki scoffed, “Yeah, well apparently that’s changed.” He hurried to Ogawa, who was starting to struggle in the heroes’ hold again. “Hey man, it *is* you, right? I’m gonna kill you for disappearing like that, you know that right?”

Ogawa struggled a little more at that, “You...you have to help me save him! He’s...he’s still there! I can’t...I don’t know how to be a hero, man, I can’t do it on my own! You...You have to help me save him.”

He was getting more agitated by the second and Katsuki felt a hand on his shoulder as Rock Lock came up behind him, “Step back, Kacchan. You don’t know what those people did to him, he might not be the person you remember.”

That must not have been the right thing to say, because Ogawa went crazy as soon as he heard it. Eraserhead must have had to blink, because any tentacles that weren’t straining against Rock Lock’s quirk instantly flexed and grabbed at anything close to launch at the heroes, “Shut up! You don’t understand! You lucky hero! *Get out of our way!”*

With one last grunt of effort, Ogawa broke through Rock Lock’s quirk and Katsuki took an involuntary step back as all of his tentacles started writhing around in every direction. A few that had been anchored farther away and stretched as the fight moved snapped back like an elastic band and both Rock Lock and Eraserhead were hit full force by tentacles moving at slingshot velocity. Katsuki shouted and ran to Rock Lock’s side, only to realize he had been knocked out by the blow. He couldn’t see where Eraserhead had landed. Amplifier was trying to keep a hold on Ogawa’s arms, but there wasn’t much she could do. Even without his monster of a quirk, Ogawa was bigger than she was and whatever modifications those villains had done to him had only made him stronger. Within seconds, he had twisted out of

her hold and shoved her to the ground.

Katsuki had to do something. He still hadn't been given permission to fight, but that didn't matter because he wasn't about to explode Ogawa just because he was panicking and not thinking right. Exploding his way out of this would be taking the easy way out and yes, running *towards* Ogawa when any single one of his tentacles could probably take his head off was probably one of the most terrifying thing he'd ever done in his life, but he wasn't a coward that just relied on violence to get his way anymore.

His feet moved before he could think.

Shouta landed in a rough roll and hissed as he took stock of the damage. He was definitely going to have to reup his vaccinations after this, and his head was buzzing like there was no tomorrow, but nothing was broken, so he could still fight. He hadn't seen what happened to Rock Lock or Amplifier, but he wasn't naive enough to think that the monster wasn't going to hurt Bakugo just because they had history together. Real life didn't get perfect fairytale endings like that.

He rolled his shoulders and was about to jog back to the fight when a marble hit him hard beneath his shoulder blade. Instantly, he whirled around to see Viridian running toward him as fast as possible, pointing above his head the moment that he made eye contact. Shouta glanced toward the sky and his blood ran cold as he realized it wasn't his head that was buzzing.

That was a lot of bees.

Viridian was slightly out of breath when he reached him, "Queen Bee. Can't find the host. If she injects a berserker with trigger…"

Eraser instantly activated his comm, "This is Eraser, we need backup and medical on Dagobah beach." He turned to Viridian. "See if you can get a vantage point. Queen Bee can fill her drones with anything, even explosives, so use your slingshot, but don't get close. The berserker is after an informant of ours, Kacchan, so it's likely Queen Bee is here to help with an abduction. I'm not about to let that happen."

Viridan nodded once, then disappeared to follow his instructions. At least the kid was following directions for once. He'd be a great hero if he'd just let them help him. Shouta ignored his injuries and sprinted

back to the fight, yelling as he went, “Everyone get to cover! Now!”

It seemed like everything was just combining to give Izuku nostalgia today, even though logically, a life threatening fight *should* have been enough to distract him from the memories. But no, the informant they were trying to protect just *had* to have the same nickname as his childhood best...whatever they were to each other. Izuku knew they weren’t the same person, obviously, but it was still a painful reminder. It was like a war drum inside his head that beat louder with every footstep.

Weak. Useless. Worthless. Quirkless. Deku.

Izuku pulled himself up onto the top of a refrigerator, then a dryer, an oven and finally what looked to be a smaller refrigerator and perched at the top of the pile. He was used to ignoring those voices when he fought, so it didn’t take much thought to shove them aside and focus on staying alive and saving everyone he could. He grabbed his slingshot and set his eyes on the approaching bee swarm. He loaded a marble and fired off his first shot, knocking a couple of bees out of the air, but otherwise not doing any damage. He was going to need a different strategy.

Amplifier shouted a warning, but Katsuki resolutely ignored her as he barreled toward Ogawa, avoiding the tentacles that were going crazy around him. He grimaced as one of the tentacles whipped at his cheek, leaving a weird stinging sensation behind, but Katsuki just grit his teeth and ignored it, “Ogawa, man, listen to me. The heroes can help you, but you’ve gotta calm down a bit, alright?”

“The heroes don’t…” Ogawa’s eyes were blown wide with panic and whatever those monsters had drugged him with, “They don’t understand! I have to...I have to save him!”

“Alright, then we’ll save him.” Katsuki didn’t know what he was signing up for, but at this point he didn’t care, he’d figure out a way to do whatever it was. He was being given a chance to save his friend and he wasn’t going to waste it. “We’ll save him, I promise, but you gotta calm down and let the heroes help you.”

“O-ok. Let you help me. Ok.” The tentacles slowed down and Katsuki held up his hands cautiously as he inched closer. “We’ll save him. We’ll…”

Katsuki had almost reached him when Ogawa tensed up, “Hey, talk to me, asshole! What’s going on?”

“No! No, no, no, no, no, no!” Ogawa started freaking out again and his tentacles whipped around like crazy, forcing Katsuki to drop onto his stomach to avoid getting knocked into the trash, “They’re here! They’re going to...”

“Who’s here?” Katsuki had to scream to be heard above the rush of wind as Ogawa’s tentacles cut through the air. “Talk to me you idiot! Who’s here?!”

The stillness of Ogawa’s body contrasted starkly with his wildly moving tentacles as he slowly turned to look at Katski, his eyes impossibly even wider than they’d been before, “Can’t you hear them, Bakugo? It’s the bees.”

Izuku wasn’t going to be able to fight the bees with a slingshot. He might be able to take down the berserker, but oddly enough, the monster wasn’t what scared him. Berserkers were terrifying, yes, but Izuku had fought them before and knew how to deal with them. But Queen Bee was still a mystery. She was a hive mind that Izuku couldn’t just *fight* and the only time he’d gone against her in the past, he had downright lost. When he went up against a berserker, he knew what he was risking and knew more or less what the monster would do, but with Queen Bee, he had no idea. She was a complete wild card and that made her the biggest risk.

Eraserhead had told him to stay at the beach and get a good vantage point, but he had also told him to keep his distance from Queen Bee, so Izuku hoped he wouldn’t be too angry about him leaving. He wasn’t going to be able to fight the swarm physically, that much was obvious, but he had hacked the swarm before, so that meant he could do it again!

Izuku just couldn’t get over the fact that when he had left the beach and started asking the remaining civilians if anyone knew where he could find a computer, one of the police officers had immediately offered him the one from his car. There wasn’t even any question of why he was asking or anything, the police had just recognized that he was a vigilante and given him what he needed. It was weird, but nice.

He didn’t have time to focus on the strange warm-fuzzy feeling, though, not when there was a villain he needed to stop. Izuku had parked himself on the pavement just off the beach so he could still run

and join the fight if needed and typed rapidly to recreate a simplified version of the program he'd used to try and hack the bees before. He didn't actually need to be able to give them orders or track their location or anything, because if their self destruct feature still worked the way it had last time, then simply attempting to hack into them would be enough.

One of the bees flew past him, then doubled back and Izuku pushed himself to type faster. He could do this. He just had to take control.

The buzzing was loud enough to make his brain rattle as the largest swarm of bees Katsuki had ever seen descended on the beach. Somehow, when he'd found those bees near Ogawa's apartment, he had somehow just been thinking about a couple of bees, like one or two in a fly on the wall situation, not a whole swarm! He kinda got why Ogawa was freaking out now, this was terrifying.

Ogawa was clearly panicking, frantically moving his tentacles to knock as many bees out of the air as he could as the swarm attacked. Katsuki himself wasn't faring much better. He hoped that Eraser would forgive him for using his quirk, especially since some of the trash was now starting to light on fire, but his explosions were currently the only thing between him and becoming a horror movie victim. Partially wrecked bees were starting to cover the sand from both their efforts and Katsuki shimmied backward through the sand to try and reach Ogawa, wincing as some of the bees stung him before he could explode them. The stings hurt way more than they should have. Katsuki had been an adventurous kid, he'd been stung by plenty of bees before in those woods he used to play in, but none of their stings felt like someone was pushing peanut butter that someone had set on fire underneath his skin! There was no way they could fight this. They needed to get to cover, now!

He was almost close enough to make a grab at Ogawa when he suddenly felt something wrap around him and he was dragged away, "No! Stop! I gotta…!"

Eraserhead growled as he pulled Katsuki to his feet, "Come on."

Katuski dug his heels into the sand, "But he…."

"Won't even let you get close enough to grab him." Eraserhead said. He looked worse for wear, several bee stings forming welts across his face and hands as he grabbed Katsuki by the collar and started dragging him toward the water. "We can't save anyone if we're dead!"

There was a splash as Eraserhead dragged him underneath the water with only just enough warning for him to take a deep breath. The thin layer of protection and the cold water on his stings felt so amazing that Katsuki almost cried in relief, but he still kicked and punched at Eraserhead to get him to let go. He didn't. He just kept dragging them deeper and deeper into the water.

They had to breathe eventually, though, so it wasn't long before Eraser let them come up for air. The bees swarmed above the surface of the water where they'd disappeared, but seemed to have lost track of them in the darkness, at least for the moment. Katsuki struggled against Eraserhead's hold, "Get off me old man! I have to…"

"These bees can be filled with anything." Eraserhead said firmly. "And since it's not trigger, I have no idea what it is, but I know it's not good. I'm sorry."

"Can't you at least try to grab him or something?!" Katsuki wished he could let loose a giant explosion and take out the whole swarm in one go, but even if he hadn't been soaked to the bone, Ogawa was in the middle of that swarm. If Katsuki used an explosion that big, he'd take him out as well. "Cancel his quirk and use your creepy scarf thing!"

Aizawa looked at him with determination and wiped the water out of his eyes, "This is going to give away our location. Get ready to go under."

Katsuki nodded and took a few deep breaths as Aizawa let go and let him tread water, his feet just scraping the sand beneath him. Aizawa's scarf shot out and he activated his quirk. Even when it was wet, Aizawa's hair defied gravity as Ogawa lost control of his tentacles for just long enough for the scarf to wrap around his waist and yank him toward the water. There was a split second where nothing happened, and then the entire swarm rushed toward them.

There was a splash as Ogawa hit the water and Katsuki took a deep breath as he went under too. Even though they couldn't swim, the bees swarmed right by the surface, buzzing loudly enough that Katsuki could still hear them even underwater and a sick feeling of dread chilled him even more than the water could as the realization struck him.

They were only safe for as long as they could hold their breath.

Izuku yelled in triumph as he finally made his connection with the

swarm. A few of the bees had identified him as a threat, but their buzzing was more annoying than anything else as he swiped them away. He'd gotten a few stings, but figured the bees must not have any venom or anything, because it didn't hurt as much as a normal bee sting would. It was basically just a pinch like when he accidentally stabbed himself on one of Mom's sewing pins, so it was pretty easy to work through. Izuku couldn't help grinning as he instructed his program to latch onto the correct frequency and target every bee he was close enough to connect to.

Then he ducked his head and pressed enter.

Shouta's lungs were burning, but he knew what was waiting for them the moment they came up for air. Whatever the bees had injected them with was starting to burn even more as it spread out from the injection site and if it hurt that badly from just a few pokes, Shouta didn't want to think about what would happen when the bees were able to reach them again.

Suddenly, there was a bright flash of light above the surface of the water and the buzzing stopped. Shouta glanced over at Bakugo to see if he'd tried exploding something again, but he was still underwater, clutching onto Ogawa for dear life. Shouta didn't trust it, didn't know what was going on, but he was starting to get light headed and he had to breathe eventually or he'd pass out underwater. He hesitated for as long as he could before going up for air.

He gasped as he breached the surface and he could hear Bakugo coughing behind him, but to his surprise, no bees came after him. His eyes were stinging from the salt, but he resolutely wiped away the last of the water and looked around, shoulders sagging with relief as he realized that the bees were finally gone. The only sign the swarm had ever been there at all was a mess of old parts coating the water.

"Come on." Shouta huffed, stumbling slightly on the wet sand as stood up and started walking toward the beach. "We all need medical attention."

Bakugo didn't answer, so Shouta turned around to see him trying desperately to keep a limp Ogawa's head above water as his tentacles spread out around them. Bakugo looked up at Shouta with more panic than he'd ever seen the boy show, even when he'd been telling them about being cornered by Stain.

"Sensei…" Bakguo choked on the words as they came out. "Sensei,

he’s not breathing.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 03.20.2021

Recovery

Chapter Summary

The aftermath of the beach fight.

Chapter Notes

Art:
Just Dandy
Blood Bee Kazoos
Microo
D4rkCh13f73n
Hotdisastergay
EeveeIsEevil
Tess_
Sheepy
Jellybeennn
BirdD X
Arbee's thirsts for blood X
MayaTBee

Memes:
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

More Memes at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki stared at the blankets, gripping the itchy fabric to anchor himself as he tried to ignore both his emotions and his old man sitting in the corner. His parents had arrived while the doctors were rushing him through the halls, trying to figure out what poison those stupid bees had shot him up with. Katsuki himself had been completely blacked out at that point, but when he'd finally woken up, his old man told him that the old hag had been so stressed that she decided to leave so she wouldn't get kicked out, which somehow wasn't surprising at all. Other than that, he hadn't been told anything, so he was just going through the fight over and over again trying to make some sort of sense out of everything.

There was a knock at the door and his old man looked at him hesitantly before responding, "Come in!"

"Good morning, Bakugo." The doctor smiled as he opened the door.

“How are you feeling?”

“Like shit.” Katsuki huffed, “But I’m not in pain anymore, so there’s that.”

The doctor nodded and noted something in his chart, “That’s good to hear. Honestly, you’re lucky to be alive right now. But I’m sure you’re wondering what’s going on, so I’ll try and answer all your questions as best I can.”

What Katsuki really wanted to ask about was Ogawa, but he didn’t know if the doctor would actually tell him anything. By the time they had managed to get out of the water, the paramedics were already waiting for them. One of the teams had immediately taken Ogawa from his arms and one guy started chest compressions while the other was busy grabbing a gas mask. Katuski wanted, *needed,* to stay and make sure his friend was ok, but either the stings had gotten worse with time or he'd just run out of adrenaline, because his entire body had felt like it was on fire. When another team of paramedics had started dragging him away, he couldn’t even tell which way was up and down, much less fight them off, and he vaguely remembered Aizawa being in pretty much the same state. He remembered being loaded onto an ambulance as someone tried to ask him ridiculous questions like what year it was, but then everything just went black with pain and he’d woken up hours later to his dad doing crosswords in the corner.

“I, uh, think we mostly like to know what happened.” Dad eventually answered. “I know the nurse said something about having to administer an antidote, so does that mean Katsuki was poisoned?”

The doctor nodded, “The villain that attacked you was using mechanical bees as an injection method for an experimental poison that has been outlawed pretty much the world over at this point. It latches onto a person’s quirk factor and uses that as an anchor point to destroy the person from the inside out. Thankfully, the danger level depends on the dose, so since young Bakugo here was only stung a few times, we had more than enough time to administer the antidote. You’re going to experience some muscle weakness for the next week or so and we’ll need to keep you here for a few days for observation, but other than that, you won’t have any negative effects. You’re very lucky.”

Katsuki nodded absently and gripped the sheets a little tighter. If the poison depended on the dose, then what did that mean for Ogawa?

He'd been covered in bee stings by the time Katsuki handed him off the paramedics and he hadn't been breathing. Katsuki had assumed that it was from the water, but what if it was because the poison had already done it's work? What about Eraserhead? Was he going to have to get a new homeroom teacher before the school year even started?

"Katsuki." His old man grabbed his hand gently. "Katsuki, do you have any questions for the doctor?"

"Probably won't answer 'em anyway." Katsuki grumbled.

"You'll never know if you don't ask." the doctor pointed out kindly. "But I have been authorized to share some updates with you and I promise that I'll try to answer your questions the best I can."

Katsuki glared at him skeptically, but the doctor kept smiling patiently until he gave in, "What about everyone else? I know for sure I wasn't the only one on that beach and everyone else got it worse than I did."

The doctor nodded, "I figured you might ask about them. Thankfully, the entire area was mostly evacuated before the bees arrived, so only a few civilians and police officers were caught up in the attack. They all received a low enough dose of the poison that they're going to be released later today. As for the heroes present, they're all going to be fine after they've had some time to recover. Rock Lock and Amplifier both managed to find cover and minimize their exposure as soon as the bees attacked, so both are awake and doing fine just like you. I was told you were rescued alongside Eraserhead as well, so you'll be pleased to hear that, while he did receive a higher dose, we expect him to wake up within the next few hours."

Katsuki nodded along, and waited for a moment after the doctor stopped talking for him to keep going and finish his explanation, but he never did, "And Ogawa? What about him?"

The doctor's face scrunched a bit in confusion, "Who?"

His old man looked back and forth between them a few times, "Katsuki's friend. He went missing a little bit ago. Katsuki, you never told me they found him!"

"They didn't." Katsuki grumbled. "He found us. Before the bees showed up, there was a villain going around and wrecking stuff. Tentacles for hair, dumb jokes, ugly face, you can't miss him. How is he doing?"

The doctor's face fell and he hurried to disguise his expression a split second too late, "I wasn't aware that you had a connection to him."

"Yeah, well, I do." Katsuki huffed. "He's dead, isn't he? I failed."

"Katsuki!" Dad scolded. "You can't just ask that!"

"Shut up, old man!" Katsuki snapped. "If he's dead, I wanna know. No point in drawing it out any longer than we already have!"

The doctor cleared his throat and both Katsuki and his old man turned to him with rapt attention, "You have to understand that the young man in question received a much higher dose than anyone else present during the attack. We did all he could for him, but…"

"But he's gone." Katsuki finished numbly. "He's dead."

"No, we did manage to stabilize him." The doctor assured quickly. "But the poison had already done a lot of damage and...well, I probably shouldn't say this but his biology isn't exactly *normal.* I've never seen another patient like him in all my years of practicing medicine, so while we are trying everything we know, there's a lot that we still have no idea how to help with. Like I said, we managed to stabilize him for now, but…"

"But?" Katsuki prompted.

"But your friend is in a coma." The doctor said. "I'm sorry, but we don't know exactly when he'll wake up."

"Of course, Mitsuki, anything." Mom assured her. "And Izuku and I will bake you some cookies. You just focus on taking care of Katsuki, alright? You too. Bye."

Izuku picked at his food as she hung up the phone and slumped down in the chair next to him, "Is Kacchan going to be ok?"

Mom sighed and grabbed his hand, "Yeah, he'll be fine. Apparently he got caught up in a villain attack last night and had to be rushed to the hospital. Everything's alright now and he's going to be fine, but they're still going to keep him there a few days, just to make sure."

"Oh." Izuku tried to remember if there were any other villain attacks that had happened last night, but he'd basically fallen into bed the minute he'd gotten home and hadn't woken up until after sunrise, so

there was always the possibility that something had happened that he didn't know about. "Um...are we going to go visit him?"

Mom looked at him softly, "I'm probably going to go, just to be there for Mitsuki, but I'm not going to make you come along. I know your history with Katsuki is... *complicated.* "

Izuku winced. He may not have ever said that Kacchan was one of his bullies, but he supposed it was kinda obvious after everthing. That didn't mean that he didn't still *care* about him! But he didn't really want to visit him in the hospital either, and he was beyond positive that Kacchan would only explode him if he tried to show up, so he was grateful that Mom wasn't going to force the issue.

"I'll still help you make cookies." Izuku offered. "I hope he's alright…"

Mom ruffled his hair and smiled, "The heroes saved him, so I'm sure he'll be fine. Now, did you and Kaminari eat the last of the chocolate chips?"

Izuku gave a guilty smile that had Mom rolling her eyes.

"Of course you did." she sighed. "Alright, I'm going to go buy more and you finish whatever school work you want to get done today before I come back, ok?"

"Sounds good!" Izuku grinned and gave her a thumbs up as she headed out the door.

He didn't have any assignments due soon, but he booted up his computer anyway. Last night's berserker attack was nagging at him and he just couldn't put a finger on why. Maybe because it wasn't just one thing that felt off. First of all, that octopus monster hadn't felt like a normal berserker. It hadn't just been filled with rage and it hadn't tried to hurt people, with perhaps the exception of the informant that Eraser had mentioned. If it wasn't for the quirk acting like it had been pumped up on steroids, Izuku would have probably never even thought it was a berserker at all.

And then there was Queen Bee's involvement in the whole thing that just didn't make sense. Both Izuku and Eraser had assumed that the bees were there to help out the berserker, probably by injecting it with trigger, but if that had been the case, then by the time Izuku destroyed the bees, the berserker would have been, well...going berserk. Instead, after the explosion, the beach had been deadly still and it was obvious that the fight was over. He was exhausted and not

in the mood to outrun Eraserhead, so he'd just left the laptop for the police to reclaim and gone home before anyone could try to catch him, but if Queen Bee hadn't been there to help the berserker, then why *had* she been there?

The obvious conclusion, even though it made Izuku so horrified that he wanted to throw up, was that this was another case of tying off loose ends. It was possible that the berserker didn't act like the others because it wasn't finished yet or for a multitude of other reasons, and it had somehow escaped before the villain factory had been planning on releasing it into the wild. Even for that though, did she really need to send a whole swarm? The only reason that Izuku could think of for sending that many bees was that failure was not an option, which meant that there was something about last night's berserker in particular that the villain factory didn't want them to know.

So, of course, Izuku had to find out what.

He pulled up a file he'd hacked from the police servers earlier of past instant villains that had been reported missing. If he could figure out who the berserker had been, then he might be able to find out what changes had been made and it might lead him to what the villains were trying to cover up. He felt more and more nauseous as he scrolled through the list, which was much longer than it should have been. If All for One had access to that many strong quirks, what was stopping him from using them to take over the world? Was it just All Might and the other holders of One for All at that point? Could they even fight him if he were to start attacking with full power?

Eventually, Izuku found...well, he found something and even after scrolling through the list two more times, nothing else fit. Unless there was someone similar who wasn't ever reported missing, then this must be last night's berserker. Or, Izuku supposed, who last night's berserker *used* to be.

Aito Ogawa

Quirk: Tentacle Hair

Izuku skimmed over the file. He'd been missing for a few months, but what Izuku was mostly interested in was the quirk section. There was no corrosive element to Ogawa's quirk and he was in his twenties, so it wasn't likely that a secondary element like that would develop naturally. In addition, according to Ogawa's file, he could really only stretch his tentacles a few inches, but from what Izuku had observed

last night they were almost elastic…

He gasped softly, eyes widening as he read through the document again, this time knowing exactly what he was looking for. He was half-hoping that he didn't find it, so when he did, he instantly wished he hadn't.

Goku Gomu

Quirk: Elasti-Arms

Izuku had fought him. It was months ago, but he still remembered the adrenaline-fueled rush he'd felt when he realized that the stretch of Gomu's arms couldn't be infinite and had climbed a building to figure out how to beat him. He didn't keep up with any of the villains or thugs he arrested, so Izuku hadn't even realized the guy was missing, and now...well, now he wasn't. Or, at least his quirk wasn't.

If he had been asked on a quirk theory exam how the berserker's quirk was related to Ogawa's, Izuku's first answer, and the one his professors would wholeheardedly believe was correct, would be that the berserker was part of the next generation. The parent's quirk would have combined with someone else's to create a new, unique, quirk in the child. The only problem here was that Ogawa was in his twenties. There was no possible way for him to have a grown child that could have manifested that quirk.

But, from what he'd learned about the history of One for All from All Might, quirks could combine when transferred. It probably wasn't common and in the case of One for All, it had been accidental, but if Izuku was right, then the villain factory had figured out a way to make it happen intentionally. In that case, the berserker wasn't actually a berserker at all. Berserkers had their own quirks ramped up to 11, but last night's victim had multiple quirks that had artificially weaved themselves into one coherent whole.

Last night's villain hadn't been a berserker, but instead was an amalgamation of several different quirks forced into one holder. Ogawa's quirk provided the tentacles, obviously, and then Gomu's quirk had weaved into that and combined to form something new: tentacles that could stretch almost without limit. Originally, Gomu's quirk had affected the user's arms, but it was possible that it was simply the most useful limb present. Some quirks were like that, rarely, and if the user was lucky, they never knew about it, but if a quirk affected a user's hands and they were amputated, the quirk

would sometimes change and start manifesting in their feet. If Elasti-Arms was meant to manifest in the most useful limb, then it could have easily transferred to affect the tentacles when it combined with Ogawa's quirk.

Which meant that Izuku probably wasn't looking for an ink quirk to complete the amalgamation. With an octopus-type quirk as a base, any liquid-based emitter quirk would likely manifest as an ink instead of how it had presented for the original holder, simply because of the way the quirks were set to combine. That meant that any emitter quirk that produced a corrosive liquid could have potentially been used as an ingredient for the new quirk.

Finding that one took a bit longer, since he started looking with the most recent cases first, assuming that the third person must have been abducted around the same time. Both Ogawa and Gomu had disappeared within months of each other, but the villain factory had apparently been collecting quirk for as long as they'd been running experiments, because the match he found was a woman who had been missing for almost five years now.

Daita Ashido

Quirk: Adjustable Acid

Izuku closed the tabs quickly when he heard his mom open the front door and noted the names to pass onto Eraserhead next time he saw him. He could deal with this later, for now it was time to make cookies for Kacchan.

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X

Promises

Chapter Summary

Katsuki continues his recovery and gets some visitors.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Nazareth
Toni the Souper Bee
Sheepscot
Kattrina 123
Arbee's thirsts for blood
Mintii

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Flowers? Really?” Shouta deadpanned. “You do know they’re just gonna die in a few days, right?”

“You’re such a spoilsport Shou.” Hizashi groaned. “They’re meant to make things more cheerful while you’re in the hospital! Add some color!”

“My sleeping bag already does that.” Shouta countered.

“Yeah, but these are prettier.” Nemuri laughed. “Come on, Shouta, it’s not as if you let yourself stay in the hospital that often. We need to take advantage of every second while we can!”

Shouta glared at her, but knew she was right. Even when he was injured on patrol, he was much more likely to go to Recovery Girl or deal with it on his own than go to the doctor. The only reason he was actually following the doctors orders now was because his body was beyond exhausted from fighting the poison and he didn't have enough stamina to stand for more than a few minutes at a time, much less jump out the window or let Recovery Girl work her magic. At least the doctors assured him he’d be back to normal by the end of the week, but for now he was stuck here. Plus, *maybe* he was trying to set a good example for Viridian just in case the kid was paying attention, but nobody would be able to prove that.

Shouta turned to Tensei, “Any word on Viridian?”

Tensei shook his head, “I had my team comb every alley and rooftop near that beach, but no dice. Either he didn’t get stung, or…”

The awkward truth hung heavily in the silence between them and Shouta hated it. The logical part of his brain told him that if Viridian *had* gotten stung, he would have been in too much pain to get very far, but the illogical part of his brain reminded him to never underestimate the problem child’s self destructive tendencies. It would be just like him to refuse to go to the hospital despite being poisoned, simply because he wanted to save the antidote for someone who deserved it more. It was the first time since they’d met that the kid wasn’t suicidal and now Viridian had probably been murdered. It would have been darkly funny if it wasn’t so tragic.

“What about your other problem child?” Nemuri asked finally. “I’ve been hearing more and more about this *Kacchan* lately. He’s making quite a name for himself.”

Shouta rolled his eyes, but accepted the change in subject gratefully, “He’s Amplifier’s problem child, not mine.”

“He’s in *your* homeroom.” Hizashi pointed out. “That kinda makes him yours.”

“Classes haven’t started yet.” Shouta argued. “He’s not my problem.”

“And yet…” Nemuri teased. “So…? How’s the kid?”

Shouta held out for a few stubborn seconds before sighing, “He’s fine. I haven’t talked to him yet, but the doctors say he’s not going to have any long term effects from the poison, which is good. PTSD is another question, but we’ll cross that bridge when we come to it. The berserker that was involved in the attack used to be the kid’s friend before he went missing.”

“Oh…” Nemuri’s face fell. “I’m sorry. I didn’t know.”

Shouta shrugged, “It is what it is, unfortunately. At least we’ll have someone he trusts there to ask questions when the guy wakes up. Maybe we’ll actually get a lead this time, assuming we can keep the media from reporting that he survived and protect him from any other attempts on his life.”

“That sucks.” Tensei said.

“Yeah.” Shouta dragged a hand down his face and groaned. “Yeah, it does.”

Katsuki chewed thoughtfully on one of the cookies that Auntie Inko had brought. She’d said that Izuku had helped her bake them, which was nice. Katsuki felt a little bit guilty, but he was actually sort of grateful that Izuku hadn’t come with her to visit him. What would he even say to him? It wasn’t like he could just greet him with: *hey, sorry for bullying you for ten years and telling you to kill yourself, how’s life?* Even if their parents weren’t in the room, that would just be way too awkward. He’d have to face him eventually, Katsuki knew that, but he just didn’t know what to say. How was he supposed to even start a conversation, much less actually apologize for everything he’d done wrong? He felt like he was a better person now, but would Izuku even be able to see that?

If Ogawa was awake, he’d be willing to vouch for him, but he wasn’t. Katsuki kept meaning to go visit him, but just like talking to Izuku, the thought was intimidating. He’d failed him. He hadn’t even been able to *look* for him because he hadn’t been in the hero course yet! Maybe he shouldn’t have listened to the heroes and just gone full vigilante, but he hadn’t and Ogawa had paid the price for that. Well, now that he was in the hero course, he wasn’t going to be holding back anymore.

There was a knock at the door, probably the doctor or one of the nurses coming to poke and prod him again, which Katsuki didn’t want to deal with. He didn’t really have a choice, though, so the sooner he let them in, the sooner it would be over, “Come the fuck in!”

“Watch your language, brat!” his old hag yelled. “Come on in!”

Now that there wasn’t the threat of his imminent death, his old hag actually trusted herself to be around the hospital without making a scene, or at least not one big enough to get her banned from visiting. His old man always came with, though, just to make sure nothing blew up. Katsuki was sure they’d already given his doctors a few grey hairs and he’d only been there a day. The door opened slowly and Tsukauchi walked in, pushing Aizawa in a wheelchair.

Despite everything, Katsuki couldn’t help grinning at the sight, “Nice wheels, old man.”

Aizawa glared at him, “It’s not too late to expel you.”

“Uh…” his dad looked between them in confusion. “I’m sorry, sir, but do you know Katsuki?”

“The hobo’s Aizawa.” Katsuki explained. “He’s gonna be my homeroom teacher at UA.”

“Eraserhead here was one of the pro heroes that protected your son during the attack.” Tsukauchi added. “I’m Tsukauchi, the lead detective on this case.”

“Thanks for saving the brat’s life.” his old hag butted in. “I know he’s a pain in the ass, but we’re glad you’re willing to put up with him anyway.”

“And here I was thinking he picked up his language at school.” Aizawa grumbled to himself, making Katsuki muffle a snort. “It’s my job, ma’am. I’m not about to let one of my students die, not when I can do something about it.”

“Still, we’re very grateful.” his dad said. “This is the second time we’ve almost lost Katsuki in the last year, so having him here and safe is nothing short of a miracle for us.”

“Hey! I’m still here!” Katsuki yelled loudly. “Stop talking about me like I’m just some weakling who just needs to be saved. I’m gonna be a hero or did you morons just forget that?!”

“Katsuki!” His dad scolded. “You can’t talk that way to heroes!”

“Actually, I’m pretty sure your son talks that way to everyone.” Aizawa smirked. “In fact, I’m pretty sure he’d swear at All Might if given the opportunity.”

“Alright, listen here you hobo…” Katsuki started, but Tsukauchi interrupted him.

“We actually have a few questions for your son, if that’s alright.” he said calmly. “This is a difficult case, so we believe Kacchan might be able to shed some light on it, due to some of the allies he’s made in the underground as well as his connection to the victim.”

His parents looked at eachother hesitantly, but eventually, the old hag nodded, “You alright with that Katsuki?”

“Anything to help find these bastards.” Katsuki answered quickly. “What do you wanna know?”

“First of all, did Ogawa try to attack you in any way?” Tsukauchi asked.

“No.” Katsuki shook his head. “He was chasing me, but he wasn’t trying to hurt me. I’m pretty sure he just wanted my help.”

Tsukauchi noted something down in his notebook, “Do you know why? It would make more sense to seek out a hero if he wanted protection.”

Katsuki frowned, “He wasn’t asking for protection, though. It was weird, but…I don’t think he was alone wherever those bastards were keeping him. He kept saying stuff about how the heroes wouldn’t understand, but that I needed to *help save him* , whatever that meant. It sounded like he was talking about somebody else, not himself.”

“I came to the same conclusion.” Eraserhead said. “It’s likely he found you more trustworthy because of your friendship, or maybe because he thought your connections in the underground would help save the person he was talking about. It’s hard to tell based only on what he said during the fight.”

“Frustrating is what it is.” Katsuki growled. “I promised myself that I’d save him and then I didn’t. And now he wants me to save someone else and I can’t even do that because I don’t know what I’m looking for and he can’t tell me because he’s in a coma! It fucking sucks!”

His old man reached out to him sympathetically, “Katsuki…”

Katsuki smacked his hand away, “Save it. I’m just gonna have to work extra hard at UA so I can keep my promise, got it?”

Tsukauchi nodded in understanding, “We’re looking forward to it. Just reach out if you encounter any information that might be relevant to the case. Other than that, I believe that’s all the questions we have at the moment. Anything else relating to the investigation can wait until after you’ve recovered.”

Katsuki huffed and settled back against his pillows, “Whatever.”

There was an awkward silence and Katsuki knew that Eraser was staring at him, but he refused to acknowledge it. Finally, Aizawa sighed, “Have you gone to see him yet.”

Katsuki didn’t look up. “No. What’s the point, anyway? It’s not like he’ll even know I'm there.”

“Actually, there is some evidence that coma patients are at least passingly aware of what’s happening outside.” Tsukauchi explained. “Consistent exposure to familiar voices, especially, can make a big difference in someone’s recovery.”

Katsuki hesitated for another moment before giving in, “Fucking fine. But you’re coming too, you dumb hobo.”

Aizawa just grinned.

Walking into Ogawa’s hospital room was weird, not the least of which because he wasn’t actually walking. The stupid poison had drained too much out of him and he’d only stubbornly made it a quarter of the way down the hall when his legs gave out from under him and he had to have a nurse haul him into a wheelchair. Thankfully he’d at least convinced his parents to stay behind, so the only person to witness his failure was Aizawa, but that was bad enough.

The nurses that had pushed them there gave polite nods as they left the two alone with the patient and Katsuki hesitantly scooched a little closer to the bed. Katsuki knew he looked rough, but Ogawa was even worse, if possible. The bright red welts of the bee stings stood out starkly against his skin, which was so pale that it almost looked grey under the hospital lights. His tentacles had shrunk a bit, but were still significantly longer than Katsuki remembered them being last month, and they had gotten so much darker that if Katsuki hadn’t seen them before his transformation, he would have just assumed they were black. The circles under his eyes were bigger than Aizawa’s and even asleep, he looked exhausted.

“What did they do to him?” Katsuki whispered.

“We’ll find out.” Aizawa’s voice was full of determination. “The good news is that he’s not showing the same signs of mental degradation that the other berserkers were, even if we’re not sure why. If he can recover from the poison, he should survive. The doctors here are already looking into what makes him different than a normal person, and we’re going to figure this out and make sure it doesn’t happen to anyone else, alright?”

Katsuki didn’t respond. He just kept looking at his friend, a mix of anger, desperation and confidence welling up inside him, “I couldn’t save him. I’m not gonna fail again though, I’ll be damned if I ever let that happen again. I promised him I’d save someone and I’m gonna do it. That’s not enough though. I’m gonna catch these damn villains so

that when this idiot finally wakes up, he doesn't have to be scared anymore. Sound like a plan hobo?”

Aizawa nodded, “I think you’re starting to get what it means to be a hero.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 03.24.2021

Moving Forward

Chapter Summary

Life doesn't stop.

Chapter Notes

Art!
LillyPadGirl000
That's so Yikes
Hollis
Liz_Cygibi_386
BlaX
Blurry X Star System
Blood Bee Kazoos
GreenHeron

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki sat on the crumbling boardwalk and stretched as he waited for Shinso to show up. When he'd suggested the beach as a training location back after the entrance exam, he wasn't expecting to have almost died there. He'd had to practically fight his old hag to convince her to let him go out, but the doctors said there wasn't anything to worry about and his strength was already almost back to normal, which was more important than ever with classes beginning in a few days.

There was no guarantee the Shinso was going to show his face, but hey, at least Katsuki was *trying* to pass it on or whatever the redemption program wanted him to do, and he wasn't about to turn his nose up at some extra physical training so that he was ready to face the villain factory when he found them. If Shinso really wanted to be a hero then it was up to him to put in the work. If he wasn't willing to do that, then that wasn't Katsuki's problem.

"This place is a mess."

Katsuki glanced up and saw Shinso hesitantly picking his way across the rotting boards, nose wrinkled in disgust at the smell. Katsuki turned back toward the beach and scoffed "Yep. One wrong move on

these boards and you'll fall through, so watch where you step."

"That's comforting." Shinso said wryly. "Why are we here instead of, I don't know, a *normal* gym or park? Wasn't there a villain attack here a couple of days ago or something?"

"Something like that…" Katsuki clenched his fists, "But that just means it's more of a mess than usual. And we're here because it's good for training. If you can get used to being aware of where you place your feet to avoid falling through a boardwalk, then you'll be more aware of how and where to step on a rooftop to move silently or to avoid traps, depending on what you need. If you can get used to running on sand, and you won't immediately roll your ankle when you're faced with a street filled with debris. And if you build muscle hauling trash, then that'll help when you're taking down villains. Now come on, you're gonna help me clean up this beach."

Shinso raised an eyebrow skeptically, "Seriously?! This whole beach? Are you actually insane?"

"Probably." Katsuki shrugged, "But I don't think you have a whole lot of room to talk. You're trying to do the impossible too, right? Unless, of course, you *did* get into the hero course after all and you're not counting on a hail mary during the sports festival."

Shinso was notably silent, not that he expected anything different, and Katsuki stretched, "Come on, let's get started. If we wanna be heroes, we're gonna need both mental and physical strength. All the determination in the world isn't going to be enough if any thug on the street can overpower you."

He jumped down off the boardwalk and onto the sand, only to slip a little on the landing and end up on his hands and knees. This sand was what had made the chase with Ogawa so damn difficult. When Shinso when he started laughing at him, Katsuki just brushed the sand off his hands and raised an eyebrow, "Alright, you think you can do better? Let's see it."

Shinso's eyes widened slightly, but he quickly rose to the challenge and jumped down after Katsuki. He didn't do any better.

Katsuki's laugh echoed across the beach as he reached a hand down to help Shinso up, "Looks like we both have work to do, Eyebags. Show me what you got."

Dabi groaned and spread the pictures out in front of him again. He'd pulled on every single one of his connections to get even this much, but it still seemed like things were missing. He could trace the villain factory's influence, he could figure out a few people they'd abducted, but there wasn't even a single clue as to where they were located or who the people behind it were. No wonder the police hadn't been able to find Endeavor in time, it was like trying to figure out what a puzzle was supposed to look like based only on the edge pieces.

It didn't help that he was distracted by...well, by everything really. He didn't know how he was supposed to feel about his sibling at this point or even how he *wanted* to feel. On the one hand, it was their fault, and Shouto's fault in particular, that he'd been cast aside by Endeavor and forced to go beyond his limits just to prove himself, but on the other hand, they were still his family. They still had a connection and a shared history that he couldn't just erase. It made everything so much more complicated. Why couldn't he have just killed his old man like he'd always wanted? It would have made things so much easier!

He kept telling himself that the articles he kept reading about the Todoroki siblings were evidence for his investigation, but even that excuse was starting to wear thin. Now that Endeavor was gone, the villain factory most likely didn't give a shit about the family he'd left behind, which meant that the only thing Dabi was learning from his research was that he was curious and stupid.

He still kept reading the articles.

Fuyumi had apparently taken custody of Shouto and Natsuo was old enough to be his own guardian, which was a hell of a lot better than Dabi had gotten when Endeavor cut him loose. Reporters kept bothering what was left of the Todorokis for tell-alls and exposes on Endeavor's abuse, but they'd apparently decided to try and put it behind them, because they never answered any of the questions. Dabi supposed that it was easier to forget, or at least pretend that they'd forgotten, than to face everything that the bastard had done to them, but that was a luxury that was really only available to Natsuo and Fuyumi. It wasn't like Dabi or Shouto could forget what they'd gone through when the evidence of it was branded onto their skin.

Dabi shook his head and forced his attention back to the information in front of him as he willed it to make any sort of connection. He'd hoped that there would be some sort of pattern to the disappearances, but the only thing he'd learned was that the villain factory was well

connected enough to disappear anyone they set their eye on. Everyone from small time crooks like Ogawa to the former number two hero had just disappeared one day without a trace, only to return different or not at all. Trying to track down the villain factory was like trying to find bigfoot.

Maybe if Kacchan were willing to work on the case, the two of them might be able to put their heads together and come up with something. He had a good head on his shoulders, but the heroes had somehow convinced him to wait until he got into the hero course to start investigating full-force. It was really annoying, but there wasn't much Dabi could do about it except for be patient. He hated being patient.

His staples started itching, which meant that he was probably tired and had been at this for too long, but Dabi just rubbed at them and kept going. He wouldn't be able to get a restful sleep anyway with all these questions buzzing around in his brain, so what was even the point in trying? He sighed and rearranged his notes again, his eye catching on an article announcing that his little brother was going to be in UA next year. Before he could think better of it, Dabi grabbed the paper and burned it to ash. The only thing his family had ever given him was pain, so what did he care if Shouto was really going to be a hero? He'd left that path behind a long time ago, so now the only thing to do was find the people who had taken Endeavor and give them a piece of his mind. Unlike perfect little Shouto, Dabi wasn't made to be a hero.

Izuku hadn't seen any of his usual heroes in days and it was starting to throw him off. Every night that he'd gone out, there was a different mix of heroes and he was starting to get concerned. Why in the world was Mt. Lady patrolling in Amplier's usual area? It just didn't make sense! What had happened to Eraserhead and Amplifier? Even Rock Lock should be out here, but he wasn't! Did it have something to do with the berserker attack? Or, well, the not acutally berserker attack, but still, were they ok?

With those thoughts in his mind, when he saw Eraserhead perched on the edge of a building, Izuku grinned in relief and bounced up to him, "Hey Eraser! Long time no see! Where have you been?"

Eraserhead, for some reason, looked shocked, "Viridian! You're alive?!"

“Um, yes?” Izuku pouted. “I told you I wasn’t trying to die anymore! I even stayed away from that tentacle monster! Don’t you trust me?”

“No.” Eraserhead shook his head. “I mean yes, you did very well, but when you didn’t show up in any hospitals after the attack, we were worried and feared the worst. The rest of us were hit pretty hard by that poison. They just barely let me out of the hospital yesterday.”

Izuku tilted his head in confusion, “What poison?”

Eraserhead raised an eyebrow at him and spoke slowly, like he thought Izuku was an idiot for some reason, “The poison the bees were filled with? You know, the massive swarm that descended on the beach like some biblical plague? Ring a bell?”

“They were filled with poison?!” Izuku exclaimed.

He felt fine! Had the ones who stung him just been duds or was he about to drop dead at any moment? Should he go to the hospital? But Eraserhead had already pretty much recovered, so if it were going to affect Izuku at all, it would have already, right? Why would it affect Eraserhead and not him?

“Yeah, it was pretty nasty stuff.” Eraser sounded exhausted. “It latches onto the quirk factor, so we’re lucky the hospital was able to get everyone the antidote in time. We think the berserker actually escaped and the villain factory was just trying to tie off loose ends. We were pretty worried when you didn’t ever show up to get medical attention,”

“Oh…” Izuku’s mind raced. A poison that latched onto the quirk factor was unique, and the villain factory had most likely been hoping that it would degrade the quirk, or quirks, enough that it would be difficult to figure out what they had been trying to do. It was really concerning that they had access to a poison like that, but it explained why Izuku wasn’t dead! But he couldn’t really say that to Eraserhead without explaining the whole quirkless thing. “Um...don’t worry about me, I, um, I didn’t get stung? At all! I’m totally fine!”

Eraserhead narrowed his eyes skeptically, “All those bees and you didn’t get stung once?”

“I, um, found cover?” Izuku tried. “And the bees weren’t going after me anyway, they were trying to go after that, um, well, it wasn’t a berserker, so I see why they were trying to get rid of him...it....them? It’s complicated.”

Eraser's eyes narrowed, "What are you talking about? What could he be other than a berserker?"

"Um, well, according to what I dug up, he's kind of an amalgamation of several different quirks? Maybe even different people?" Izuku said hesitantly, grabbing the notebook, he'd prepared. "I know it sounds ridiculous, but I noticed that the quirk seemed like it should be part of the next generation, like the child of the people the Villain factory abducted, but that's not possible in the time frame we're working with. But, from what I've learned about quirk transfer, I think it makes sense for one quirk to be mixed with other quirks during the whole transfer process. I tracked some of the abductions that were linked to the villain factory, and I'm pretty sure I know whose quirks they used!"

Eraserhead sighed in exhaustion, "Of course you do. I don't even know why I thought you would take a break after almost dying. That would be *intelligent.* Alright then, let me see what you found."

Izuku handed him the notebook and Eraserhead started thumbing through it. While he was distracted, Izuku silently stood up and faded into the shadows. He probably wouldn't have any better opportunity to get away, and he'd already passed on the important information that he needed, so as soon as he got off the roof, Izuku ran to find another person to save. He hadn't died yet, so he was gonna keep fighting.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 03.26.2021

First Days

Chapter Summary

The first day of UA

Chapter Notes

Art!
A true Gentle Bee MayaTBee
Hollis
LilyPadGirl00
presudeosk

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

More Memes at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shouta needed more coffee, but honestly, he didn't know if there was enough caffeine in the world to make today seem manageable. He'd given Viridian's new notebook to Nedzu and All Might as soon as he'd come in this morning and he knew that having confirmation that All for One was involved should have felt satisfying. It was a lead, which was more than they usually had, and they could move forward with this information, but at the same time, it was daunting. How were they supposed to fight an overpowered legend that was actively turning innocent people into superweapons?

And of course the universe hated him, which meant that he couldn't even focus on the break in the case because he had brats to traumatize. At least he already knew that some of them had potential, so he wasn't worried about expelling his whole class. Bakugo would be there, as would Kaminari, and they were both sure to be a handful. And then there was Tensei's little brother, who had a good head on his shoulders, even if he was a little stiff. It still remained to be seen if Todoroki wanted to be a hero for himself or if that had been his father's dream, but hopefully he'd figure that out soon enough. The rest of the kids still had to prove themselves.

He shimmied himself into the classroom and waited for the class to fall silent. Bakugo and Todoroki both noticed straight away, but neither of them said anything to warn their classmates. Bakugo just

smirked at him and Shouta could tell he was filing this moment away for blackmail purposes. Too bad everyone important already knew about his sleeping bag, so using it as blackmail was completely ineffective.

Finally after about a minute, Kaminari happened to look over and stared at him for a long moment before blurting out, “Dude. What the fuck?”

As one, the class swiveled their heads toward him and Shouta winced as everyone started yelling and speaking over one another. Tenya immediately started scolding them and Bakugo just snorted as Shouta emerged from his sleeping bag. This wasn’t doing anything to help him need less caffeine.

“It took you all over a minute to notice me. That’s unacceptable. In the field, hesitation like that will get you killed.” He activated his quirk as he spoke and several students backed away. “If you intend to make it here at UA, you’re going to have to do better. Much better.”

He pulled a gym uniform from his sleeping bag and tossed it to the first student he saw, which turned out to be the antigravity girl who’d helped Kaminari after the entrance exam, “You may have gotten into the hero course, but now it’s time to see if you actually deserve to be here. Let’s see what you’ve got.”

Katsuki didn’t really know what to do with himself. He had a feeling he was supposed to be making friends or something. Ogawa and Amplifier would have been pushing him towards that, if they were there, but he hadn’t really *done* friends, especially ones his own age, in...well, ever since he’d decided he was done being an asshole, the extras at school had stopped hanging around him, but had they ever really been his *friends* or were they just his lackeys? The point was that he didn’t really know how to make friends and he wasn’t off to a great start.

He’d come into the room, resolutely ignoring Icyhot, who gave him a suspicious look from the back of the room, and made himself comfortable only to almost immediately get yelled at by some four-eyes to get his feet off the desk. The old him would have cussed the guy out and told him exactly where he could shove his private school superiority, but he knew Eraser and Amplifier would never let him hear the end of it if he got into a fight on his first day at UA, so he just tched and rolled his eyes, but took his feet off the desk. Four-eyes

looked pleasantly surprised, but Katsuki just glared at him, daring him to say anything, which threw him for a loop. They stayed like that until four-eyes got distracted by some new girl walking into the room.

“Oh! You’re that girl from the entrance exam!” Four-eyes strode up to her. “I apologize that I failed to discern the true nature of the exam. Are you alright?”

“Um…” The girl gave an embarrassed smile, her cheeks turning an even brighter shade of pink than they naturally were. “Yeah, actually, someone ended up saving me...oh, hi Kaminari!”

Katsuki looked in the direction that she was glancing and saw a loud blond with a black lightning bolt in his hair giving her finger guns, “Sup, Uraraka! You got in?”

“Yeah!” Uraraka managed to look soft and determined at the same time, which was actually kinda impressive. “I never got to thank you, or well, I *did,* but I don’t thiink you remember. They actually gave me some points for helping you out after the exam, though!”

Kaminari grimaced, “I’m sorry about that, I was really trying not to overdo it…”

“It’s fine!” Uraraka smiled. “I mean, you took down the zero pointer all by yourself, so it’s understandable that you reached your limits.”

“You took out the zero pointer by yourself?!” An extra with ridiculous spiky hair whistled. “That’s super manly bro.”

“Thanks dude!” Kaminari gave him a thumbs up.

Katsuki caught some movement by the door and smirked as he realized that Aizawa was lying there on the floor like some creepy caterpillar. He probably wanted to know how long it’d take everyone to notice, but Katsuki wasn’t going to ruin the surprise. Aizawa rolled his eyes and Katsuki turned to watch his classmates again. Their faces when they noticed the hobo were going to be priceless.

Kaminari struggled to keep his balance as one of their larger classmates slapped him on the back, “Sounds like you’re super passionate about saving people if you were willing to go over your limits! I like that!”

“Yeah! That’s super cool!” A girl’s voice piped up. It took Katsuki a moment to realize who had spoken, but then he realized she was just

invisible. Izuku would probably be freaking out over her quirk if he were here…

"It's not really that big a deal…" Kaminari said bashfully. He looked at the floor to avoid everyone's eyes, but then his jaw dropped as he finally saw their teacher in the doorway, "Dude. What the fuck?"

Katsuki snorted as all the extras started freaking out and Aizawa just looked exhausted as he crawled out of the sleeping bag and tried to strike fear into their hearts. Maybe going for the whole *heroism is dangerous and you could die* angle was a little bit of a low blow on the first day of class, but it was true. Katsuki hadn't even *been* a hero and those freaky bees had almost killed him, so he could forgive Aizawa for being a little dramatic as he threw a gym uniform to Uraraka, "You may have gotten into the hero course, but now it's time to see if you actually deserve to be here. Let's see what you've got."

Aizawa turned on his heel and strode out of the room without waiting for their reactions. Katsuki scoffed and got up to go get changed while the rest of the extras just stood there in shock. Uraraka finally managed to pull herself out of it right as Katsuki passed her, "Wait, he's not serious about making us prove we deserve our place here, is he?"

Katsuki just smirked at her, "This is UA, cheeks. If you wanna survive, you're gonna have to prove it."

The determination in her eyes as she rose to the challenge made Katski grin even wider, even as the rest of the extras scrambled to get up. Maybe making friends wouldn't be too bad after all, if these extras were his options.

Denki was extremely thankful that he trained so hard with Izuku, because Aizawa's tests were *way* easier than the last time he'd done them in middle school. He wasn't able to use his quirk on most of them, but even the ones where his electricity didn't do anything, his body was strong enough to place him in the upper half of the class. It was so cool to see how everyone used their quirks to do better, and he just knew that Izuku would be geeking out if he were here.

Even though he *knew* he did well enough to avoid being expelled, he was still super relieved when Aizawa revealed the threat as a logical ruse. He didn't think he'd be able to handle getting expelled on the first day. Still, the threat took an emotional toll on him and even though it was a good, satisfied exhaustion, he was still ready to go

home and just veg out.

The day wasn't quite over yet, however, and he had just said goodbye to some of his new classmates when he saw All Might coming down the hall. Denki forced himself to be a little more upbeat than he felt, hoping that if he just pretended well enough, the real energy would follow. He still didn't quite know about the quirk, but All Might did deserve an answer soon.

When he reached him, All Might gave Denki a kind smile and ruffled his hair, "I was watching the quirk assessment. You did well, Kaminari, my boy."

The praise made him smile, "I was trying. I was so scared we were all going to get expelled!"

All Might coughed, "Yes, Aizawa does have a reputation for expelling entire classes."

"He does?!" Denki's eyes widened. "I...that was supposed to be a joke! He's really expelled entire classes?!"

"Well, I believe at least some of those students were readmitted." All Might said awkwardly. "But yes."

Denki's shoulders slumped, "What have I gotten myself into?"

All Might tried to pat his shoulder consolingly, "There, there. You didn't get expelled and that's what matters. I actually had something else I wanted to talk to you about, a continuation of our last discussion, if you're up for it."

Denki didn't think he was, but he would probably never be ready, so he nodded and followed All Might into one of the empty classrooms. All Might cleared his throat and gestured for him to sit down, "I'm sure you've given a lot of thought to the issue of receiving One for All…"

"Yeah, I've really been trying, but are you even sure it's safe?" Denki blurted out, then blushed. "I'm sorry, it's your quirk, you probably know everything about it and that was really rude."

"No, uh, it's actually a fairly reasonable concern." All Might cleared his throat. "Some more...problematic risks about my quirk were recently brought to my attention and even if you decide to accept my quirk, I would still like you to know a little more about it before I pass

it on to you, if that's alright."

Denki sighed in relief, "Of course! I'm sorry, I just don't want my brain turning to swiss cheese or anything."

All Might gave a booming laugh, "Me either. But I have been working with Nedzu and Recovery Girl to fully investigate...well, everything we possibly can about One for All." He pulled a manilla envelope from one of his giant pockets. "Here's what we've discovered so far, to help you make an informed decision. Feel free to peruse it at your leisure, and I've put my number in there as well, if you have any questions."

"Whoa…" Denki's eyes widened. "I have All Might's number…"

All Might gave a booming laugh, "That you do, my boy. Use it wisely. Now run along, you've got class with *me* tomorrow, and I'm not going to take it easy on you!"

Denki nodded gratefully, "Thank you All Might! I'll see you tomorrow!"

All Might smiled, "I look forward to it."

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

Next Update: 03.28.2021

Seek

Chapter Summary

Katsuki makes a move to involve himself in the case.

Chapter Notes

Art!
hivemind buny
Danny Cip
LillyPadGirl00 X

Tiktoks!
@abyssal.wrath
@existing_rn

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Alright, so maybe the heroes hadn't gone over all the details of what *being involved* meant, but they also hadn't told him what he *couldn't* do, with the exception of go vigilante before making it into the hero course, so now that *that* was off the table, Katsuki figured he could just plead ignorance if anyone said anything. He shoved his hands deeper in his pockets as he headed to Dabi's bar. The doctors said that Ogawa's prognosis was good. They expected him to wake up within the next few weeks, probably, but that wasn't a lot of time for Katsuki to keep his promise and take down the villain factory, which meant that he wasn't going to be able to do this alone.

The biggest problem he was running into so far was that there was still so much about the case he didn't know. Obviously, the heroes didn't want him involved in the first place so even though Amplifier *had* promised to give him an overview, he didn't trust her not to hold anything back, which meant that he needed information from other sources too if he wanted to make sure Ogawa was safe when he woke up.

From what Katsuki had heard, a lot of the information that the heroes had on the case was stuff they'd gotten from Viridian, which was a big part of why they were so hesitant to let Katsuki participate as well. Why would anyone want two snot-nosed brats going up against a

major shadow organization that was arguably better trained and better funded than either of them? But the fact remained that Viridian was apparently pretty deeply involved in the case and was better at sniffing out leads about it than almost anyone else, so if Katsuki wanted to better his understanding of the case, he may as well go to the source.

Dabi only glanced up briefly when he came in, then went back to buffing glasses, “Hey Kacchan, you back?”

Katsuki huffed and sat down at the bar, “I never left, asshole. But yeah, I just had my first day of UA this morning, so technically I’ve got more or less full permission to go poking around again. I’m gonna find these bastards even if I have to explode their asses myself.”

“Not if I burn them to the ground first.” Dabi muttered. “So? Got any leads you care to share?”

“Not yet, but I think I know who does.” Katsuki answered. “Do you know where I can find Viridian?”

Denki looked again through all the papers All Might had given him and tried not to feel overwhelmed, “This power comes with a legit nemesis. I mean, it’s kinda cool, but also kinda scary.”

“Definitely.” Izuku nodded and picked up one of the brain scans All Might had provided. “All for One did come up in my research about quirk transfer, which was part of why I was so worried when you said that you’d been offered a quirk. I’m glad All Might warned you that you might be targeted.”

“Technically, I didn’t say that I’d been offered a quirk.” Denki pointed out. “You asked and I didn’t think of a convincing enough lie in time.”

Izuku smiled, “Would you have been able to convince me though? Really?”

Denki shook his head, “With how much you know about quirk theory, probably not. What do you think? I’m having a little trouble making heads and tails of this.”

Izuku sighed and rubbed his nose, “The risks are still there, obviously, but it looks like there is a layer of protection between the quirk and the user that mostly prevents your body from rejecting it. There’s still the risk of it being too much power for your body, but oddly enough,

with your electricity quirk, your body might be more suited for that than All Might's was. Also, All Might's brain scan *did* show some minor decay, so that is still a risk, but your quirk makes your brain a lot more plastic and allows you to recover from brain damage when you overuse your quirk, which would be a useful addition for future users, if it ends up getting wrapped up into the quirk. There's always the possibility that it won't actually work that way, so you have to decide if you're going to be active for long enough for that to matter and if it's a risk you're willing to accept. From what I can see, if your quirk *doesn't* counteract that minor brain decay, it would basically act more like early onset dementia than anything else and wouldn't actually meaningfully impact your life until your sixties or seventies at the earliest."

"So, One for All isn't going to kill me, but it might make me an *interesting* old person." Denki summarized. "Alright. I mean, that doesn't sound too bad, and you said that with the way my quirk affects my body, it might not even happen."

Izuku gave him an exasperated look, "You can't count on that Denks!"

Denki laughed, "But really! It seems like it's a lot less dangerous than you thought it was! I mean, with how often I fry my brain, I'm probably gonna get dementia whether or not I accept One for All."

Izuku shrugged, "I guess...I'm just glad All Might actually researched it and told you. With the whole absolute secrecy thing, I was scared he wouldn't."

"Meh, it's not like any of this is too dangerous if you don't know what you're looking at." Denki pointed out. "The documents never identify All Might by name and even the history about All for One could easily be passed off as an urban legend."

"I guess." Izuku was silent for a long moment as he looked at the papers again before hesitantly speaking up. "So, do you know what you're going to do?"

Denki sighed and flopped back onto the floor, "I don't suppose you have any recommendations one way or the other?"

"That'd make it too easy." Izuku chuckled. "I don't know what you should decide. I will say, though, that I think you'd make excellent use of the quirk, but at the same time, you don't need it to be an amazing hero. At the end of the day, it's all up to you and the kind of hero you want to be."

Denki thought about it for a minute. On the one hand, One for All was dangerous, even if that danger just came from an overpowered nemesis, but on the other, while they were sparring, Izuku had said over and over again and he should use whatever resources it took to win. If he had to fight dirty to stay alive, he should. If he had to throw sand in a villain's eyes to get an opening, he shouldn't hesitate to do so. All Might was offering him a tool, a resource, that would allow him to be a better hero and protect people even more than he could do on his own. Could he really just say no to that? Did he even want to?

"I.." Denki looked to Izuku, who nodded in encouragement and made Denki's shoulders slump with relief. His friend wasn't going to judge him either way. He could make whatever decision he wanted to and Izuku would be there to support him, even if he made the wrong one. It was just enough of a security blanket for his decision to solidify in his mind. "I think I'm gonna accept. I wanna be the next holder of One for All."

Katsuki shoved his hands in his pockets and glared at anyone who looked like they were about to talk to him as he made his way through the bar district. According to Dabi, Viridian usually hung out between here and Rock Lock's territory, only wandering farther when it was necessary for a case or something. If Katsuki didn't manage to run into him tonight, he could always come back tomorrow, or the next day, or the next day, however long it took for him to get the information he needed to take down the villain factory. He wasn't the kind of hero who was gonna give up just because the going got hard.

He'd been out for about an hour when he finally caught sight of the vigilante. He didn't look like anything special, just a kid in a hoodie who had his back turned to Katsuki as he dumped a zip tied criminal at the mouth of an alleyway. Katsuki ran after him as the kid disappeared back into the alley and Katsuki was just fast enough to see him scamper up a fire escape before he was on the rooftops. The kid was fast, but Katsuki grinned and used his explosions to help launch him up, keeping them as quiet as possible, not that anyone would care too much about casual quirk use in this part of town.

He got to the roof just as Viridian was about to jump onto the next one and yelled, "Oi! Viridian! Slow down for one damn minute, I wanna ask you a question!"

Viridian slid to a stop and turned around, eyes blown wide with panic,

an expression that Katsuki mirrored as he froze, realizing just *who* was decked out in full vigilante gear in front of him.

“Kacchan?!” Izuku squeaked. “What are you doing here?!”

Chapter End Notes

I just want to see badass Kaminari with OfA, ok?
I am just ignoring ch. 306 of the manga. The way I envisioned quirk transfer in this universe is that it's inherently more damaging to quirkless people than quirked, since quirked people's bodies are used to having a quirk in the first place. One for All gets around this by having a barrier that protects the user from the quirk.

Next Update: 03.30.2021

Insistence

Chapter Summary

Katsuki finally gets the chance to apologize.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Cute Taco
Cosplay.lock
Moody
hoopitydoop
xXJoshOwoXx X
Akira Tetsu
Logar3
Blood Bee
That's so Yikes
Lemon_Simp X
Danny Clip
I'm totally a Bee
Alley

Tiktoks!
@smol.rock

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X

More Memes!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku was freaking out, but he was pretty sure he had an excuse! What in the world was Kaachan doing in the bad part of town?! And in the middle of the night?! It wasn't safe! What if he got attacked by a villain and didn't have permission to use his quirk to defend himself?! Didn't he usually go to bed at 8 o'clock?!

"Kacchan?!" He squeaked. "What are you doing here?!"

"What am *I* doing here?!" Kacchan looked just as shocked to see him there as he was, which was only a small comfort. "What are *you* doing here?!"

“Well, I…” Izuku hunched his shoulders and stared at the ground. All this time of hiding his vigilantism from everyone and trying to keep the heroes from figuring out he was quirkless and Kacchan was probably going to go to all their old classmates and say *hey, guess where I saw Deku last night?* He wanted to cry. How was he supposed to get out of this? “I was, um, I was just out for a walk?”

“You’re a vigilante.” Kacchan gaped at him. “No wonder no one can figure out your fucking quirk!”

Izuku flinched like he’d been slapped. Of course Kacchan wouldn’t buy his half-baked excuse, no one would, not when he was dressed as a vigilante and obviously out doing vigilante things. And he was right, no one ever thought that a quirkless kid could be a vigilante, and Kacchan had always known just how to expose his weaknesses, even with just a few words. It was like middle school all over again. Izuku hadn’t ever wanted to go back.

Kacchan gripped his hair as he kept staring at Izuku, eyes wide in shock. He opened and closed his mouth a few times, like he didn’t even know what to say and Izuku could definitely relate. Finally, he took a deep breath and let his hands fall, “Does Auntie know?”

“No.” Izuku said softly. Tears prickled at the corners of his eyes, threatening to fall, but he wouldn’t let them. Instead he gave a wet chuckle. “Fighting villains is too dangerous for…for people like me, so if Mom knew what I was doing, she’d probably bubble-wrap me in my room for eternity. Um…what about you? Does your mom know you’re out here this late?”

“I mean, kinda?” Kacchan shrugged. “The old hag knows I’ve been making a lot of friends and acting as an informant of sorts for the heroes, but I didn’t tell her exactly what info I’m after or anything like that. She’s kinda sad I ruined my sleep schedule though.”

“Wait..informant?” Izuku’s eyes widened as he connected the dots. “ *You* were the informant from the beach attack?!”

“Who the fuck else would it be?!” Kacchan complained incredulously. “The easter bunny?

“I just…” Izuku’s mind was reeling. “But, I heard Eraser calling you *Kacchan.* You never liked that name! How…I swear…no offense, but why haven’t you exploded him yet?!”

Kacchan sighed and ran a hand through his hair as he sat down at the

edge of the roof, “It’s a long story.”

He didn’t say anything else, and Izuku didn’t want to die a painful death, so he didn’t push. Instead he sat down next to Kacchan and debated what to say. He could say something about how he was glad to see that he was alright after the attack, but knowing Kacchan, he would probably think that was pity, so he probably shouldn’t bring that up. He’d almost forgotten what it was like to have to walk on eggshells like this. It made him even more grateful for the friendship he’d formed with Denki. He might have to deal with weird quirk situations and willingly get mildly electrocuted on a semi-regular basis, but at least he didn’t have to second-guess everything he said all the time to avoid dying.

“You know you’re gonna get arrested eventually, right?” Kacchan said finally. “This shit’s illegal, you know that, so what’re you gonna do then?”

“Nothing?” Izuku said. “I mean, I’m not even technically a vigilante, when you think about it. Under Japanese law, Vigilantism is defined as using one’s quirk to fight crime, so…”

Kacchan looked at him in shock for a long moment before he started laughing, “Oh shit, that’s kinda brilliant. But wait, there’s still assault and shit like that, right? You can’t just loophole your way out of *everything,* can you?”

Izuku shrugged helplessly, “I think you’re underestimating just how many loopholes exist. Laws aren’t written with me in mind.”

“Wait a damn minute.” Kacchan suddenly turned on him, making Izuku flinch. “If they can’t even hold you, then why are you working so hard to avoid getting arrested? They can’t do shit to you, so why do you keep running away?!”

“I…I just don’t want things to change.” Izuku said quietly, hunching in on himself a little more. “Most people…well, nothing's ever the same after people find out, Kacchan. You know that.”

Kacchan flinched, “I…I know.”

Izuku jerked his head up in surprise. Kacchan’s face was twisted with sadness and even regret, which was really confusing. If anything, Izuku had been expecting anger, since his last comment was kind of pushing it. He hadn’t expected whatever this reaction was and he didn’t know how to feel about it.

“For what it’s worth, I’m sorry.” Kacchan said quietly, which confused Izuku even more. “I should never have treated you the way I did. I never should have called you Deku, and I’m actually trying to use your real name now, but I was a stupid bully and I should have gotten my head out of my ass way sooner than I did. I wasn’t a good kid and wasn’t doing a good job of being a hero either and you didn’t deserve any of that shit. I’m so fucking sorry.”

Izuku just stared at him, an odd sense of *wrongness* making his skin crawl. This wasn’t right. Kacchan didn’t make mistakes. He never had. Kacchan was strong and amazing and a perfect future hero. That had been one of the only constants in Izuku’s life, even before their quirks were supposed to come in, and Kacchan didn’t apologize, so why was he trying to do so now? Izuku was fine! He’d gotten through it and he knew now that he was never gonna be a hero, so he didn’t need an apology, especially one from someone who *wasn’t supposed to apologize!* It was all just too much.

He realized that he’d probably let the silence drag on for far too long and he should respond, so blurted out the biggest thing on his min at the moment, “Kacchan, what are you even talking about? You don’t have anything to apologize for!”

“What the fuck are you talking about, you damn nerd?!” Kacchan said incredulously. “I bullied you for ten years, of course I have shit to apologize for.”

“I’m mean, it hurt, yeah, but...well, it doesn’t really matter, right? You said it yourself, Kacchan, I’m useless. I’m just a stepping stone so other people can be great, and I mean, you made it into UA, so that was obviously right, at least on some level.” Izuku pointed out. “And, I mean, it’s just the way the world works, Kacchan! I’m quirkless. I’m always going to face discrimination no matter what, so why should it matter if it comes from you or from anyone else? Besides, if it had really been that wrong, the teachers would have stepped in and stopped you years ago, so…”

“Our teachers were basically villains, Izuku.” Kaccan growled. “And can you really look me in the eye and tell me a bully deserves to be a hero without making any changes?”

“But you weren’t really a bully? Sure, you got a little *rough* sometimes, but we were *kinda* still friends, I mean we grew up together…” Izuku tried, but Kacchan cut him off.

“You can’t be serious.” He looked completely exasperated, which just made Izuku feel worse. “This is exactly why I need to apologize so bad! I obviously messed up something in your brain because you didn’t deserve any of that shit, you shouldn’t have to live with being treated like dirt, and I personally should have been a way better human being! Why can’t you realize that?!”

“You’re not a terrible human being, Kacchn.” Izuku said.

“No, not anymore.” Kacchan crossed his arms. “But I sure as hell *was* the last time we saw each other. I told you to jump off a roof, Izuku.”

Izuku rubbed his arm awkwardly, “I mean, it’s not like you were the only person to ever tell me that…”

“But I was the first.” Kacchan pointed out. “That wasn’t ok, Izuku. And before you say *you’re used to it,* you shouldn’t have to be.”

“It’s really not a big deal, Kacchan.” Izuku didn’t know if he believed that or not, but everything was just so weird and *wrong* right now that maybe if he just kept repeating it enough, maybe it would eventually be true. “And even if it was, it’s over now, I got out of the school…”

“Yeah, after you were blamed for bullies breaking your damn arm.” Kacchan huffed. “Great, yeah, that’s a fucking improvement.”

Izuku winced, “Kacchan…”

“Why didn’t you fucking show up to the entrance exam?” Katsuki asked. “You fight real villains every single night. A bunch of robots would have been a piece of cake! And then you’d be in a hero course instead of giving Eraserhead a headache every night.”

“Kacchan...” Izuku stared at his lap, picking at one of the holes in his jeans, “you *know* why I can’t be a hero.”

“I thought I did!” Katsuki sounded exasperated. “But apparently I was fucking wrong, wasn’t I? Look at you, Izuku! I’ve seen videos of you fighting, and you’re obviously not weak or useless everybody always said. Like *I* always said. All those things were just stupid, predjudiced, quirkless lies. I mean, you’re basically already a he…”

“Look, can we just drop it?” Izuku pleaded. He was tired. Seeing Kacchan was stressful enough, but getting into a fight with him? Hearing him say all the things that Izuku had wanted to hear for years, but had already come to terms with the fact that he was more

likely to develop a quirk than to hear them? It was all too much and he felt like he was about to cry if they didn't stop talking about this right now. "You said you wanted some info, right? Can we please just talk about that instead? Please?"

Kacchan had always been stubborn, so it took a few long seconds of Izuku's puppy dog eyes before he finally closed his mouth with a click and scowled, "Fine. Whatever, I won't force you to accept my apology or whatever, but we're gonna come back to this later, *Izuku."*

Izuku flinched a little at the name, which still just sounded so *wrong,* especially since he'd spent so many nights as a kid dreaming about Kacchan actually using his real name. What had he done wrong? Has he done anything to convince Kacchan that he wouldn't be a good hero? It must have been Izuku's fault somehow, so the least he could do was try to help him and answer his questions to make up for it, right?

"So?" Izuku prompted after Kacchan had been sitting in surly silence for almost a full minute. "The info?"

Katsuki sighed. He hadn't thought that it was possible to feel *worse* than he had when he'd first realized he was acting like a villain, but here Izuku was, proving him wrong again. He'd known that he probably left Izuku with scars, but he hadn't really realized how deep those injuries had really gone. He wanted to shake some sense into the nerd, but did he really have a right to do that after he'd been the one to plant those ideas in his head in the first place? He owed Izuku an apology, but if he wouldn't accept it, then what? Maybe he owed it to him to be patient and let him recover at his own pace? Let him make his own decisions and not get in his way? Let him change the subject without question?

"The villain factory." Katsuki said eventually. "What do you know about 'em?"

"Are you sure?" Izuku blurted out, "It's a really dangerous case. Not that I don't think you can handle it! You're amazing! But, um, I mean, *I'm* not even supposed to be involved, so..."

"I know." Katsuki couldn't help smirking. "Eraser keeps complaining about all the headaches you're giving him by working this case like a dog with a bone."

"I'm not trying to!" Izuku whined. "I'm trying to be careful and I'm not even trying to ki...I just don't know why he insists on worrying so

much!"

"It's because he cares about you, you idiot." Katsuki rolled his eyes. "He *is* a teacher. Give him some credit."

"I guess…" Izuku frowned. "But anyway, this isn't just taking down thugs in alleyways, Kacchan. There are things going on here that even Eraserhead and All Might are afraid of. Are you sure you really want to be involved?"

"I already *am* involved." Katsuki grumbled. "You were at the beach attack, right? You ever see the tentacle villain that was tearing up the place?"

Izuku nodded, "We all thought it was a berserker at first, but after I actually looked into it, I realized it was actually a combination of multiple quirks from at least three different people. We're pretty sure that something like this is actually what the villain factory has been chasing after this whole time."

"I…" Katsuki swallowed as his mouth went dry. "He was my friend. *Is* my friend. We met after you left school and he, well...he helped me out a lot with figuring out what kinda hero I wanna be. Then he disappeared and I couldn't find him, until…"

"Oh." Izuku's eyes widened. "I'm so sorry, I didn't know. I didn't mean to be disrespectful talking about him like.."

"Whatever nerd, it's not a big deal." Katsuki cut him off. "You were always into the quirk stuff anyway, with your notebooks, right? The point is that he told me there were others and made me promise to save them even as the bees were going after him."

"I guess that makes sense." Izuku muttered. "If All for One did finally figure out how to force the body to accept multiple quirks then of course he would want to have multiple experiencements running at once."

"Wait, back up." Katsuki said. "You've said that twice now, and I thought I just misheard you the first time or something, but obviously not. You keep saying Ogawa's got multiple quirks, but that's impossible, isn't it? You can't just take someone's quirk and give it to someone else! Quirks don't work like that...do they?"

Izuku gave him a *look* and Katsuki swallowed. He got the feeling he was in for a long night.

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X

Next Update: 04.01.2021

Battle

Chapter Summary

I am so excited about this chapter...and next chapter...

Chapter Notes

Art!
Dead Waitress
Rick.Roll X
ElementalDragon27 X X X X
Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Dude!” Sero pleaded. “If you know what we’re doing this afternoon, just tell us!”

Denki grinned widely, “Sorry, cross my heart and hope to die, I’m not supposed to tell anyone, but I will warn you that you’re all about to lose your minds!”

“Ugh!” Mina sobbed. “I swear this is worse than not having any hints at all!”

“Dunce face probably doesn't know shit.” Bakugo scoffed from across the room. “He’s just messing with you.”

“Am not!” Denki pouted. “Ok, maybe I *am* having fun, but…”

“That’s not manly dude!” Kirishima complained.

“If Bakugo’s right and you don’t know anything…” Mina warned.

“Everybody shut up!” Jiro yelled. “The teacher’s coming!”

Denki smiled knowingly and watched his classmates' reactions as the door slammed open and All Might, *the All Might,* came into the room and struck a pose, “I am here! To be your teacher!”

The class exploded into excited yells as Denki chuckled, “Told you you’d lose your minds.”

“You *knew!?* ” Kirishima’s eyes bugged out of his head. “All Might is

so manly dude!"

"Thank you for the compliment, young man!" All Might laughed loudly. "But enough about me! This is about you, the next promising generation of young heroes! To be heroes, however, you have to look the part!"

He pressed a remote and a section of the wall slid away, revealing a collection of briefcases labeled with their student numbers. Denki couldn't hold back a gasp, and he wasn't the only one.

"Are those our costumes?!" Hagakure yelled. "So cool!"

"Hurry and get dressed, then meet me at practice ground Beta!" All Might instructed. "Let's see what you can do!"

Denki didn't waste any time getting dressed. He and Izuku had designed his costume together and they'd both decided to keep it simple and practical so that it wouldn't get in his way while he fought. Denki would have loved to stay and gawk at all the other guy's awesome costumes, but he figured he'd have time to do that later while they fought and he didn't know when he'd get another opportunity to really talk to All Might. He knew that he'd given him his number, but it just felt so *wrong* to casually text the number one hero, *hey, I looked over the information and I know it's probably dangerous, but decided I want to accept your quirk and become the next symbol of peace anyway. Cool?*

Thankfully, when he got out of the dressing rooms, All Might was the only person there. When he caught sight to Denki, he grinned, "Young Kaminari! You look like a hero!"

"Thanks!" Denki bounced up to him and smiled. "It feels so weird, you know? I've wanted to be a hero for so long and now it's actually happening!"

"Well, you deserve it. I'm sure you'll do well." All Might ruffled his hair. "How have you been? I'm sure you didn't have time to look over *all* the information I gave you, as there was quite a bit..."

"Actually, I read it all last night." Denki corrected quickly. "Sorry, was I not supposed to? It's just that it was easier to get it all done in one go. If I'd split it up, I was scared that I'd forget about it, or.."

All Might laughed, "Don't worry, my boy, there's nothing wrong with

being eager! It just surprised me is all! So...what did you think?"

He looked nervous and Denki got why, "Well, there are some risks, obviously, but...well there's risks to being a hero too, right?"

All Might nodded sadly, "Yes, my boy. Yes, there is."

Denki took a deep breath, "I've been thinking about it a lot and...I'd like to accept, if the offer is still there. Is that alright?"

"Are you sure?" All Might's eyes were wide, and he still looked nervous but Denki could tell he was excited too. "I'm not going to judge you or treat you differently if you decide to reject the offer."

"I...I know." Denki said. "But if this will help me be a better hero, I don't want to say no."

All Might smiled gently, "Very well. I'm proud of you, young Kaminari." He reached up and plucked a piece of hair from his head. "Eat this."

Denki took a step back, "W-what?!"

"Well, uh…" All Might rubbed the back of his neck. "The quirk transfer has to happen through ingesting DNA, so…"

"Oh…" Denki thought back to what Izuku had told him. Quirks were part of a person's DNA, so that made sense, and Izuku was always doing weird quirk experiments and he usually went along with those, so this wasn't too different, right? "O-Ok..."

All Might gave him a smile and Denki returned it hesitantly. Eating the hair obviously wasn't *comfortable,* but it also probably wasn't the weirdest thing he'd ever eaten, so Denki just decided he wouldn't think about it too much. He wasn't sure what getting another quirk was supposed to feel like and it wasn't like Izuku would know either, so he couldn't have asked him, but still, he'd expected *something.*

After about a minute of sitting there awkwardly, he spoke up, "Am I supposed to feel any different? Did it work?"

"Oh, it worked." All Might assured him. "But you might not notice the power until you try to use it."

"O-ok." Denki heard a door opening and turned to see the rest of his classmates making their way toward them. Now that he was starting

to think things through, he was realizing that maybe he shouldn't have impulsively chosen to receive One for All right before a combat exercise…

Katsuki's entire world-view had just been flipped on its head in more ways than one and yet, here he was, expected to go to class like everything was completely normal. First off all, Izuku Midoriya, the weak, quirkless, deku he'd bullied for years had gone vigilante behind his back. That would be shocking enough, but apparently he was really fucking good at it?! Katsuki took back everything he'd ever said about Izuku not being able to be a hero, because when he'd gotten home he'd looked up every video he could find of Viridian fighting. Sure, they were all shaky phone camera videos, but now that he knew who he was looking at, he could see it. The nerd never used a quirk and never gave up.

Which was what made it so frustrating that he'd rejected his apology. If Izuku had rejected it because he didn't forgive him, that would be one thing. Katsuki expected that. But outright saying he didn't think he *deserved* an apology and trying to pass off what Katsuki did as normal or accepted?! Bullshit! But then again, there wasn't anything he could do. He didn't have any right to tell Izuku what to be. Not anymore.

But, because learning that the kid he'd assumed was a weakling his whole life was actually a badass wasn't enough of a shock to his system, he also had to learn, from said weakling, that pretty much everything he knew about quirks was wrong! He was definitely going to be confronting Amplifier about that. She'd mentioned that something wonky was going on with Ogawa's quirk, but multiple quirks?! Seriously?! He just kept thinking about how much Ogawa's quirk had changed. What about the people whose quirks had it been combined with? Were they out somewhere, quirkless now? What about their families?

He shook his head and pulled on his gauntlets. He'd ended up going with a slimmer design, rather than the one he'd drawn up as a kid. He was probably going to be more active on the streets at night, working to stop criminals from the shadows rather than trying to be on the 5:00 news everyday, so having giant grenades on his wrists wasn't really practical. The ones he'd gone with didn't have as much carrying capacity, but if he was working in an urban setting, massive blasts would just cause collateral damage and noise complaints, and these ones wouldn't get in the way.

His entire costume was designed to be able to blend into the shadows and alleyways he'd grown to feel at home in these past few months. Most of what he wore was black, but he had dark orange accents across the chest and on his gauntlets. He'd also gone with a practical mask and he'd asked the support company to design his headpiece so it enhanced his hearing. Overall, he thought he looked awesome and he was ready for a fight.

Dumb hair and his band of extras seemed to agree, because both Kirishima and Sero complimented his outfit as they were all getting dressed. Dunce Face had hurried out, for some reason, but everyone else was talking their time to revel in the moment as they got dressed in their hero costumes for the first time.

All Might made sure they all knew how good they looked when they came out and joined Kaminari, "You all look like amazing heroes! Japan is in good hands."

Pretty much everyone exchanged proud smiles and Katsuki rolled his eyes. He was ready to fight and train already. He was probably starting to sound way too much like Aizawa, but what was the point in meaningless ceremonies when there were people to save?

"For your first hero class, I thought a good old fashioned game of heroes vs. villains would be fitting!" All Might announced. "I will be assigning teams randomly and giving everyone a role for two on two indoor battles! Let's begin."

There was a nervous energy that buzzed through the room as the teams were decided and announced. Katsuki narrowed his eyes. Uraraka might *look* sweet, but he was pretty sure those pink cheeks were hiding something, so he wasn't about to underestimate her. Pairing her with Inasa was probably the worst thing that could happen, since they could probably make the entire match an aerial battle. That wouldn't be too bad for Katsuki, his explosions could propel him well enough that he could figure it out.

But he was paired with Iida.

Iida's quirk was literally engine. He was like a car. If Cheeks and Tornado over there decided to take to the air, they could divebomb him and he wouldn't be able to do a thing about it. And to make matters worse, they were the villains, not the heroes, so they had to worry about defending the weapon on top of everything else. This was gonna be fun.

“Hello Bakugo.” Iida was stiff as they walked to the building. “It is a pleasure to work with you! I was thinking you should stay with the weapon while I go after….”

“That’s a dumb plan, Four Eyes.” Katsuki cut him off. “I’ll go after the heroes, *you* stay with the weapon.”

Iida spluttered, “Bakugo, I really don’t think this is the time to be showing off and hogging…”

Katsuki turned on him, “I’m not a fucking show off, alright? It’s just logic. What are you gonna do if they come at you from a window, huh? Or if they stay up near the ceiling and you can’t reach ‘em? What are you gonna do then? I can use my explosions to get up there and play if they change the board, but you’re earthbound. We need to find the smallest room with the lowest ceilings we can find, preferably with no windows. Do you think this place has a basement?”

Denki watched Bakugo and Iida enter the building, but he didn’t really *see* any of it. All Might had said he wouldn’t feel any difference until he actually called on One for All the first time, but he’d been *wrong.* Maybe it was just all in his head, but now that it had been a few minutes, he felt like his entire body was buzzing with nervous energy and he didn’t even know what to do with it. He wanted to get up and move, but all he could do was nervously fidget with one of the metal rings he’d requested to be sewn onto his costume so he’d always have something to play with. He almost felt like he was already at his limit and was about to short out at any second. It was like someone had taken his normal energy, ramped it up to eleven, and then kept going. If this was just his electricity, then he’d know how to deal with that, but...

Denki’s train of thought derailed. In a way, this *was* his energy, wasn’t it? Sure, it was from One for All, not from electricity, but hadn’t Izuku mentioned that quirks sometimes mixed when they were transferred? Wasn’t that what One for All really kinda was anyway? He *knew* how to deal with his electricity, he’d been doing it for years, so if he just treated One for All like he treated his electricity, then even if it didn’t work, did he really have anything to lose by trying?

Carefully, he took a deep breath and let the buzzing spread out through his body, trying to keep the static and sparking to a minimum, though based on the way Mina’s hair frizzed up beside him, he wasn’t entirely successful. He grinned apologetically when she

glared at him, but kept sitting with his energy until it evened out enough that he could actually think again. This was gonna take a *lot* of getting used to.

"Your preparation time is over." All Might announced. "Heroes, you may enter the building!"

Iida didn't know how to feel about Bakugo. On the one hand, he was brash and uncouth, but on the other, he did seem to have the makings of a good hero. When he had insisted on Iida staying behind to guard the weapon, he had assumed that he was doing so to show off, or even just to have more chances to punch something, but then Bakugo had surprised him by pointing out that with Inasa's and Uraraka's quirks, his lack of flight ability would be a hindrance that his speed would not be able to overcome. It was frustrating, but luckily they had come up with a plan to use the environment to their advantage.

Thankfully, the building *did* end up having a basement accessed through a trapdoor on the ground floor, so the first thing they did was carry the weapon down there and place it in a closed room with no windows, blocking all the vents just to be safe. They turned off most of the lights as an extra precaution after Bakugo pointed out that if *they* hadn't known about the basement, their opponents probably didn't as well, so they should make it look as uninhabited as possible just in case they found it. As soon as Bakugo left to go patrol the halls, Iida started locking away any loose items that Uraraka could use as ammo for her quirk. The heroes might waste the entire time on a wild goose chase upstairs, but if they came down, he would be ready to fight them!

Ochako couldn't help but be infected by Inasa's energy as they sat outside the building. He was really loud, but so passionate about everything, especially hero work and he was pretty powerful, at least according to the quirk assessment yesterday. Fighting Iida and Bakugo would probably be challenging, but she liked their chances.

"Alright!" Inasa grinned as All Might announced the beginning of the match. "I can use my wind to kinda sense obstacles, so finding this weapon should be a piece of cake!"

"Awesome!" Ochako pumped her fist, ready to fight as soon as Inasa's winds found the weapon. They would probably send Iida out to counter them and have Bakugo guard the weapon, which was doable. As long as she could trip Iida up long enough for her to touch him,

she'd be able to restrain him. It wouldn't be *easy,* but this was a hero course, so why would it be?

It had been a few seconds now and Inasa still hadn't said anything about the weapon. Ochako looked over to see Inasa frowning in confusion, "Um...Inasa? Is something wrong?"

"I...I can't find it." Inasa turned to her. "The building's completely empty."

"What?" Ochako frowned. "Is that allowed?"

"I think they have to keep the weapon in the building." Inasa said. "But I'm pretty sure Bakugo's on the roof. Let's go confront him!"

"Yeah!" Ochako stepped toward the door only to hear Inasa laughing. "What?"

"There's an easier way up." He teased. "Don't you have an antigravity quirk?"

"Well, um…" Ochako blushed. "I can't really use it on myself."

Inasa grinned, "That's alright, I'll give you a lift then!"

Ochako's stomach dropped as a strong breeze lifted her up and into the air. The wind roared around them and it was both terrifying and exhilarating, but it only lasted a few seconds before she was dropped gently on the roof, "Ok, that was awesome."

"I know right?" Inasa smiled. "Flying is the best feeling in the world!"

"Meh, it's alright." Bakugo's voice came from the doorway and both Ochako and Inasa lowered into battle stances as he emerged from the shadows, looking every bit the villain he was supposed to be playing for the exercise. "But have you tried arson? I dunno, setting shit on fire's pretty fun."

"Of course you would say that." Inasa laughed. "Where's the bomb?"

Bakugo cracked his neck, "Right here, Tornado."

He charged, launching an explosion right at Inasa's face and when Inasa used the wind to carry him upward and dodge the blast, Bakugo didn't even hesitate to follow him into the sky. Ochako's jaw dropped. How many people in this class could fly?!

“Uraraka! Go find the weapon!” Inasa ordered. “I can handle this guy!”

“Sure, Cheeks, you can go ahead and try.” Bakugo sneered. “But I doubt you’ll find Iida before I get rid of this extra.”

Inasa laughed, “That’s what I like to see! Let’s fight!!”

“Whoa…” Kirishima whistled. “Those two are pretty manly…”

Denki nodded in agreement. Watching those two duke it out above the building was really cool, especially because their feet never even touched the ground. They’d all thought it was weird when Bakugo went after the heroes instead of Iida, but now it made sense. Even if it *hadn’t* been super smart it still would have been fun to watch.

Iida was busy patrolling in the basement and basically minimizing airflow and loose objects, while Uraraka was now on her second round of the building, getting more and more confused the longer she didn’t find anything, especially since half the time was gone now. The fight between Bakugo and Inasa was also heating up and there had been several close calls already.

“Is it just me, or does Inasa seem to be losing it?” Jiro asked.

“It’s the heat.” Todoroki said. “The explosions are causing heat pockets in the air and making it act unpredictably, which makes it harder for Inasa to control.”

“Todoroki’s right.” Yaoyorozu agreed. “If Inasa stays in the air, he’s actually going to be at a disadvantage, despite his quirk.”

Denki turned his attention back to the screen just in time to see Bakugo launch a final explosion at Inasa’s back and throw him onto the roof, smirking as he wrapped him up in the capture tape. The entire class stared in shocked silence for a moment before they all burst.

“That was such a dirty move!” Mineta yelled. “Hitting him for the back like that?!”

“He *is* playing a villain.” Tsu pointed out.

“Even if he wasn’t, it’s still a good move.” Denki said. “If a move saves your life in a villain fight, you should use it.”

“I guess…” Yaoyorozu said slowly. “I still find it a bit distasteful…”

Denki shrugged. Uraraka had finally found the basement, but since the lights were off, she seemed hesitant to go down. He wasn’t sure if she thought it was empty or a trap, but it wasn’t until Bakugo appeared at the end of the hall that she dropped down and started searching, only to be targeted by Iida almost immediately.

She looked around frantically for something to use her quirk on, but Iida had entirely cleared the floor, so basically she was just trying to dodge a speed quirk in a confined space. After a few moments, she apparently got fed up and tried to use her quirk on herself to make it past him, but of course, Bakugo chose that exact moment to join the fight and knock her out of the air like he was spiking a volleyball, which of course gave Iida all the opening he needed to grab her and wrap her in capture tape.

“The villains win!” All Might announced, then turned to the rest of the students. “So, class, what did you think? Did we have a VIP?”

“Bakugo.” Tsu answered immediately. “He immediately used his knowledge of our classmates’ quirks to create a strategy against them and he wasn’t afraid to do what was necessary to apprehend them.”

“He also became one with the darkness.” Tokoyami said seriously. “He was willing to fully embrace the shadows and play the part of a villain.”

“Actually, I think he does that even when he’s not playing the villain.” Todoroki spoke up. “He’s an informant for the police, so I think he’s used to being around dangerous people and situations.”

“He’s what?!” Hagakure exclaimed.

“That’s so manly!” Kirishima hit his fists together. “Look our bro, off helping fight villains already.”

“That’s so cool.” Denki breathed.

Bakugo had helped Uraraka to her feet and undone the capture tape while Iida went to go free Inasa. He even walked her out of the building! Most people had stopped watching the screens by now, so they missed it when Bakugo suddenly froze and shot a small blast at the wall, leaving behind a scorch mark like it was nothing as Uraraka hurried after him. Hagakure was the only one Denki saw give a barely noticeable flinch and nobody else mentioned it, so he figured Bakugo

was probably just blowing off some extra energy, or maybe he was just like that. Denki felt his own quirk humming through his body and realized could go for blowing off some steam himself. He was really glad his fight was next.

“No one else is going to be able to get away with hiding in the basement the whole time.” Ochako pointed out. “Now that everyone’s seen it, our classmates will know to check.”

Bakugo shrugged, “Even if the entrance had been obvious, it still would have been the most effective place to keep Inasa from just blowing the weapon away.”

“How did you even plan around our quirks like that?” Ochako asked. “I mean, we’ve known each other for, like, a day.”

“Planning around your opponent's quirk is just common sense, cheeks.” Bakugo rolled his eyes. “Anthing else is just idiotic and…”

He trailed off and Ochako followed his gaze to see a bee buzz past them and land on the wall. Did UA keep beehives? She’d remembered seeing a few of them at the entrance exam, so it might be one of the support course’s projects. She was just about to ask, but before she even had a chance to react, Bakugo had exploded the poor insect to smithereens. What had it ever done to him?!

Bakugo caught her staring and huffed before walking away, “Don’t trust the bees, Cheeks. You never know which queen they’re reporting to.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 04.03.2021

Attraction

Chapter Summary

Kaminari fights with One for All.

Chapter Notes

Art!
HurricaneFox
Zanchev
Bukkito

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Denki grinned and shot finger guns at his assigned partner, “Hey hot stuff! We’re gonna *rock* this, right?”

Jiro just looked at him like he was an idiot, which of course was the optimal reaction to a dumb pun like that, “Of all the jokes you could have gone with, it was a *rock* joke?”

“Well, you’ve the whole punk aesthetic going on.” Denki shrugged. “So how do you want to do this? I’m a close range fighter, by the way. If I can’t get in contact with my opponent, my electricity is probably just gonna go everywhere and hurt anyone around, sorry.”

“Good to know.” Jiro frowned in concentration. “I’ll be able to find them pretty easily. My earphone jacks are pretty good at picking up small sounds and all that, so if I plug them into the wall, I can tell you what room they’re in and then we can go after them together, deal?”

Denki grinned, “Sounds like a plan! Let’s *rock* this!”

Jiro glared at him, “I *will* hand you over to the villains.”

“Aww, that’d definately put a *riff* between us.” Denki said dramatically. “Can’t you *hear* my heart breaking, Jiro?”

She raised an eyebrow, “Are you done?”

Denki hesitated for a moment, “Do I have an *alternative?”*

Jiro groaned, “Kaminari, I swear to god…”

“Fine, I’m done!” Denki raised his hands in surrender. “I’m done. No more dumb puns.”

Jiro glared at him suspiciously, “You’re totally gonna break that promise, aren't you?”

“Probably.” Denki agreed easily. He tilted his head to listen when he heard All Might announce the start of the match. “Alright! Let’s do this thing!”

Jiro rolled her eyes and shook her head, but took the lead as they finally entered the building. He followed along as silently as he could, but those lessons had always been more difficult than the ones about fighting. Izuku made stealth look easy, but Denki was just *loud.* He wouldn’t be able to survive as a stealth hero.

He stopped when Jiro crouched down and jammed her earphone jack into the wall. She listened for a moment before whispering, “Third floor, northwest corner. They’re barricading themselves in, if I’m hearing right. Metal slats. Those’re gonna be a pain to bust through.”

Denki cocked his eyebrow and coated his hand with electricity, “Are you sure? I hope they’re smart enough to stand away from the door, at least.”

Jiro smirked and gestured for him to lead the way. Denki smiled and tried to be as silent as he could as they made their way upstairs. When they reached the correct room, Jiro nodded and Denki gestured for her to stand back as he leaned down and reached his hand through the crack under the door, smirking when he touched the metal Yaomomo had made to block it.

And then everything started going wrong.

He meant to put just enough electricity out to stun anyone who happened to be touching the metal, but the moment he activated his quirk, energy started pouring out faster than he was able to stop it and Denki panicked. He had no idea how much electricity One for All was capable of producing, but even without it, he could potentially produce enough electricity to kill someone if he wasn’t careful. Immediately, he tried to stop the energy from flowing out, but it wouldn’t stop flowing and all he managed to do was wrap it around himself, which would have been freaky enough if the *half the wall hadn’t suddenly torn itself out of the floor and launched itself at him.*

He heard four people scream, including himself apparently, as he all of a sudden found himself pinned to the opposite wall. He could hardly breathe as a layer of wood, concrete and metal pressed against him. Who was doing this? Did anyone here have a telekinesis quirk? No, Jiro's quirk enhanced her hearing, Mineta's made him stick to things, and Yaoyorozu could create stuff. No one's quirk should be able to make the metal attack him like he was a giant…

Denki's eyes widened. When enough charged wires wrapped around a core, it could create an electromagnet. His electricity wasn't in wires, but with the extra power from One for All and with the way he was forcing it to stay around his body, Denki had accidentally magnetized himself! That was freaking awesome! He took as deep a breath as he could, considering the situation, and focused on relaxing enough to deactivate his quirk. As soon as he did, the wall stopped attacking him and fell to the floor with a loud clang.

Denki gasped and brushed himself off as he stood up, "I, uh, I totally meant to do that."

"You *meant* to pin yourself with an entire wall." Jiro asked skeptically. "Seriously?"

Denki laughed it off, "Uh, it was only, like, half a wall at most."

"Uh huh." Jiro rolled her eyes. "Sure."

"Aww, did I forget to mention my *magnetic* personality?" Denki wiggled his eyebrows and turned back to the classmates they were supposed to be fighting. "Anyway, enough about me! Don't we have a missile to grab?"

Both Yaoyorozu and Mineta were staring at him with their jaws on the floor as they peered through the wreckage of the wall that Denki had literally just torn apart. On accident. Wow. But, they were leaving themselves open to attack like that, so Denki instantly launched forward and started fighting Yaoyorozu, using the bare minimum of his quirk for now. He didn't trust himself to really give stun shots, not with what had just happened with the wall, so he focused on producing the least amount of electricity he could at the moment, which was apparently enough to give a *very* uncomfortable tingle, judging by the way that Yaoyorozu grimaced and immediately started producing what looked like insulation sheets to protect her limbs. Out of the corner of his eye, he could see Jiro engaging Mineta.

"Come on!" Mineta whined. "I finally get to fight a girl and she

doesn't even have good boobs?!"

Denki stumbled slightly and looked at Mineta in shock, but only for a split second before Yaoyorozu used a PVC pipe like a baseball bat to hit him in the gut. It looked like she'd learned her lesson about metal and electricity, but *ow!*

He stumbled back to his feet and blocked another hit from Yaoyorozu, "Dude, you seriously need to learn how to flirt better!"

"Huh?!" Mineta sounded genuinely offended. "I wasn't flirting, you dumb-dumb! It was just an observation!"

"Uh, I think that's worse, dude." Denki said, panting as he ducked under Yaoyorozu's PVC pipe again. What with her insulation armor and her plastic weapons, he really wasn't getting anywhere with her.

He couldn't see what Mineta was doing, but he *did* hear Jiro's disgusted huff, then a body hitting a wall, "Oww! Why'd you do that?! I just wanted to touch some sweet...!"

"Change of plans." Denki interrupted. "Jiro, let's switch!"

"Glady." Jiro growled.

Denki instantly jumped back from Yaoyorozu and she tried to follow through with another hit, but Jiro parried her pipe using her earphone jacks. Denki sighed in relief, "Thanks for the save."

Jiro nodded, "Thanks for dealing with the pervert. He's all yours."

"Are you kidding me?!" Mineta yelled incredulously. "He tore an entire *wall* apart and you want *me* to fight him?! Are you crazy?!"

Denki shot him an unimpressed look as he started to run away, "Seriously? You're running away? You could have kept fighting Jiro if you were actually good at flirting!"

"I wasn't trying to flirt!" Mineta shouted over his shoulder. "And it's a tactical retreat!"

Denki rolled his eyes and cracked his knuckles. He could run after Mineta, but that would take time and take him farther away from his partner and the weapon. He grinned as an idea occurred to him, "Hey Jiro, how much you wanna bet Mineta's costume as metal in it?"

"Stop blabbering and just magnet him already!" Jiro yelled.

“Alright! I’m going, I’m going!” Denki laughed, “Let’s hope this actually works!”

He didn’t want to attract every piece of metal around him, because that would just launch a bunch of projectiles at him, but maybe if he focused his quirk in his hand? He winced as the energy became too much and spread the electricity out along his entire forearm, focusing on keeping the energy *around* his arm instead of inside it, which seemed to help. He *really* hoped they were recording this, because he wanted to see how this looked from an outside perspective. His entire arm was wrapped in so many bolts of electricity that it almost looked like he was wearing a gauntlet. He stuck his arm out toward the fleeing Mineta, who was starting to run down the stairs. He was on the third step when Denki finally built up enough electricity to send Mineta flying toward him with a scream. He cut his quirk just as Mineta was about to barrel into him, which let him catch him without knocking himself over.

“Are you sure you’re not gay?” Denki teased. “Because it seems like you’re pretty *attracted* to me.”

“You...!” Whatever else Mineta was about to say was cut off with a yelp as Denki shocked him. Even though he was getting the hang of the extra energy now, more or less, he still made sure to give Mineta *significantly* less than he usually would for a knock-out shot, but it still stunned him long enough for Denki to force him to the ground and wrap the capture tape around his wrists.

He turned back toward Jiro and Yaoyorozu, only to realize that Yaoyorozu, now that she wasn’t fighting him, had taken the insulating fabric she’d been using as armor and haphazardly thrown it over the bomb. It wasn’t covering it completely, since she’d obviously done it in the middle of fighting Jiro, but the fact that she’d even tried, combined with the fact that she’d obviously seen what he’d just done with Mineta, meant that the fake weapon most likely had metal in it that she was trying to protect from his attraction.

Denki grinned, “Jiro! Duck!”

Jiro hit the floor and Kaminari started wrapping his electricity around himself. The weapon was *way* bigger than Mineta, but he didn’t know how much metal was in there or how heavy it was, much less how much electricity he’d need to attract, so he figured better safe than sorry and just used his whole body as an electromagnet, making it as powerful as he could as Jiro hit the floor. It worked perfectly and the

weapon came flying toward him.

So did everything else.

He hardly had time to panic and he covered his head with his arms as the weapon hit him and then pretty much every piece of metal Yaoyorozu had created to barricade the room did as well. He *should* have responded by deactivating his quirk, but that wasn't a knee jerk reaction yet. No, Denki's first instinct when he panicked wasn't to produce l *ess* electricity, itt was to produce *more.*

The only warning he got that he was about to short out was a sudden surge of electricity that was more powerful than he had ever created. One for All was *definitely* going to take some getting used to.

Denki usually wasn't aware of much when his brain was shorted out. Usually, he went to this shadowy place in his brain and was only vaguely aware that things were happening around him. He could sometimes remember things that happened around him in that state, but the memories were hazy and hard to understand. Overall, it was usually an extremely disorienting and anxiety inducing experience.

The keyword here being *usually.*

But then again, he wasn't *usually* able to turn himself into an electromagnet either, so Denki figured things were probably gonna be a little weird for a while. Though, as he looked across a shadowy *nothingness* and found eight people staring at him, he thought that *a little weird* might be an understatement.

"Uh….hey." Denki waved awkwardly. "Sup?"

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 04.05.2021

Support

Chapter Summary

The aftermath of the combat exercise.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Hattie
Danny Clip X
Just Dandy
xXJoshOwoXx
FujiRielle

TikToks!
@claudiaskieshere

Memes!
X X X

control of One for All is *extremely* promising. With the exception of losing control at the end of the exercise, it appears that he used the extra power well, especially considering that how he used it was unexpected."

"I just thought it would make his *muscles* stronger." Toshinori shook his head. "I suppose it makes sense for it to strengthen his quirk instead, but…"

Before Toshinori could continue his sentence, the door to Nedzu's office slammed open and Aizawa strode in, looking distressed. He was careful to close the door behind him before freaking out, "I'm sure you figured this out already, but Kaminari has obviously either been targeted by the villain factory or is actively working with them. How are we going to deal with this?"

Toshinori coughed up a bit of blood, "What?! Kaminari working with the villain factory?! Where in the heavens would you get an idea like that?!"

Aizawa looked at him like he was an idiot, "Oh, I don't know? Maybe, just *maybe,* the fact that he showed up to class today with a suspicious new quirk? Come on, All Might, I know you use your fists more than your brain, but think about it for two seconds! Kaminari's quirk is electrification, not magnetism. Or, it was before today, but that also explains why his quirk control was so poor this afternoon when a few weeks ago, it was exemplary. All that on it's own would be bad enough, but Kaminari obviously has some sort of connection to Viridian, based on their similar fighting style, so if the villain factory is actively targeting Kaminari, they are most likely targeting him as well or, worse, their whole connection could be a trap for the villain factory to get their hands on Viridian, in the worst case scenario that Kaminari is actively working for All for One."

Toshinori sighed in relief. He had almost panicked for a moment thinking that he had been catfished into impulsively giving his quirk to a villain, but if the changes to young Kaminari's quirk were the only reason Aizawa had to suspect him, then they didn't have anything to worry about. He *did* seem oddly worried about Viridian being targeted, although perhaps that was simply because he was close to the boy.

He latched onto the idea, hoping to move the conversation away from One for All and young Kaminari, "What reason would All for One even have to target Viridian?"

Aizawa sighed and collapsed into the other chair in front of Nedzu's desk, "Where do I even begin? There's the talent he has for sniffing out information that he shouldn't have access to, and then of course the fact that he *acts* on it. From Endeavor and some of the other Berserkers, we know that All for One *is* aware of him and sees him as a threat, but I've got a theory and, as much as I hate it, I think there's more to All for One's goals than just getting rid of the kid."

"Hmm?" Nedzu took a sip of his tea and poured a cup for Aizawa. "Do explain."

Aizawa glared at him, but gave in after a moment. He looked exhausted, "Well, we've never been able to identify Viridian's quirk, which means that it's most likely weak, passive, or mental. Normally, we could expect those quirks to be fairly common, but my most recent theory is that he has a very rare, and most likely very powerful, passive quirk. At first, I thought it was just danger attraction, because the problem child has an undeniable talent for finding trouble, but after the beach attack, I'm thinking it's more than that."

He groaned and took a sip of the offered tea, "You have to admit, that with as good as the kid is at sniffing out danger, he's just as good at escaping it. For god's sake, the kid became a vigilante with the goal of a villain killing him and he failed spectacularly! Not that I'm upset about that, obviously, but the simple truth is that the kid should be dead by now, and he's not. The beach fight just makes that even more obvious. When I talked to Viridian after everything happened, he hadn't even known the bees were filled with anything and he insisted that he hadn't been stung, which sounds impossible considering the shape the rest of us were in. Even getting to cover wouldn't have protected him from every single bee and Queen Bee would definitely have targeted him if she realized he was trying to hack her hive. So the logical conclusion is that he was lying, or at the very least hiding something extremely important."

Aizawa heaved a tired sigh, "If Viridian had a quirk that not only attracted danger, but also provided him with a level of invulnerability to its effects, it would do a lot to explain how he's survived this long. In the case of the beach attack, either his quirk prevented him from being stung entirely, or simply prevented the poison from taking effect. If the invulnerability aspect of his quirk is a recent development or if he doesn't fully understand it, it also might explain why he is so insistent that he cannot be a hero. According to a lot of the propaganda, heroes are supposed to prevent danger, not draw it to them like a magnet, and he most likely would have been bullied

harshly for a quirk like that. It makes too much sense."

"And All for One would obviously be eager to get his hands on such a useful quirk." Nedzu nodded. "Well, that *is* concerning. With such a quirk, All for One could make himself practically untouchable, not that he isn't already, but yes, I can see why he would want to get his hands on Viridian, even if the boy *didn't* make a habit of meddling in his plans. Are you sure of this, Aizawa?"

"About as sure as I ever am about anything to do with Viridian." Aizawa huffed. "So not at all. But don't think I don't see what you're trying to do. Viridian might be involved with all this, but he's not the problem child we're talking about. What are you trying to hide, All Might?"

"Nothing!" Toshinori answered, probably a little too quickly. "I simply think you're overreacting! This is probably just a natural mutation. They're fairly common and quirks *do* develop oddly sometimes."

Aizawa looked at him incredulously, "Yes, when kids are little, or after highly intensive training, not randomly in the middle of class and especially not when we know that there's a supervillain on the loose who has figured out how to give people multiple quirks! Don't be an idiot, All Might!"

"Now, now, Aizawa." Nedzu said gently. "I'm sure everything will work out fine, there's no need to lose your temper. And All Might, Aizawa *is* actively involved in the villain factory case, which, by extension, means that is involved in the All for One investigation. In addition, he is young Kaminari's homeroom teacher and would most likely be able to help him, so I believe that in this particular case, openness and honesty are likely the best course of action, don't you agree?"

"So you *do* know something?" Aizawa accused.

"It's bad enough that *Viridian* somehow figured it out." Toshinori muttered. "It's dangerous, and I really don't think increasing the number of people involved will…"

"Let me get this straight." Aizawa growled. "There is a secret that is apparently so dangerous that you're actively trying to limit the amount of people who know it, even if those people *should* know, but at least two literal teenagers are knee deep in it with, correct me if I'm wrong, practically zero adult supervision?!"

“I, uh…” Toshinori deflated slightly. “I guess I hadn’t thought of it *quite* like that…”

Aizawa’s glare hardened a little more, “Start talking.”

Denki didn’t know he could experience social awkwardness in his own head. The only reaction his greeting got was shocked silence and a couple wide eyes. He felt like he was intruding on something, which was honestly kinda unfair, considering they were all in his head...or at least he was pretty sure they were. It felt kinda like a dream mixed with the usual dazed-ish state he was used to when he shorted out, so he felt justified in making that assumption, but his guests just kept staring at him, their forms blurring slightly at the edges in a way that, in his current state, felt completely natural.

“Um, I’m gonna be honest, I don’t really know what I’m supposed to do in this situation?” Denki blurted out. “Um, am I supposed to offer you water or, like, muffins or something? Cause I guess you’re kinda, like, my guests, in a way, but um...I don’t know if...does water exist here? I mean, it probably *can,* right? I mean, it’s my brain, so anything I can think up should exist, but does that make it real or…”

One of the people, a mom-like woman with her hair half pulled back, chuckled, “You’re quite the chatterbox, aren’t you, Nine?”

Denki stopped rambling and blushed deeply, or whatever the equivalent to blushing was in this weird dreamspace. Some of his visitors seemed amused, while others looked mildly confused and one or two looked downright incredulous and kind of a little angry. It was terrifying.

One of those ones, a guy who looked like a scary biker on steroids, was the next to speak up, “What the fuck, kid, how are you talking?!”

“Um…” Denki glanced from biker guy back to mom lady. “I...I thought this was *my* head. Does it not make sense for me to be talking?”

“Normally it takes a few months of having One for All to even be able to access this space and even longer to be able to communicate within it.” A guy with ratty white hair said. “Most holders just aren’t used to accessing this part of their brain yet. Sorry, you can call me One.”

“Cool.” Denki nodded. “Weird name, but cool. Also, I mean, I guess I’ve spent a lot of time here already? I mean, I guess this is where I go

when I overuse my quirk, so…"

"Wait, this happens all the time?!" Biker guy shouted. "Seriously kid?!"

"Well, it's been happening less!" Denki defended. "I've been training really hard, so I haven't really needed to go over my limits, except for that one time at the entrance exam, but then I got All Might's quirk today and I wasn't *trying* to go over, but there was just so much energy and I lost control and it was so scary and…"

"It's alright, my boy." A skinny guy with long bangs gave what was probably supposed to be a comforting smile, but it kinda fell short, especially considering that he was a lot more blurry than the others. "Adjusting to One for All can be a difficult process, but I was impressed by your performance in the exercise today!"

"Of course you were." Biker guy came and slapped Denki on the back, which was weird considering it was more of an emotional sensation rather than physical like he expected. It felt like…having a dad, maybe? "Our little Nine is a badass!"

"Um," Denki spoke up nervously. "Why do you keep calling me that?"

"You're the ninth holder of One for All." A guy who was dressed kinda like a knock-off best jeanist said. "I'm the sixth holder, so you can just call me Six."

Denki nodded and tried really hard to pay close attention as everyone introduced themselves, or each other when one of the holders didn't want to talk for some reason. Biker guy was five, apparently, mom lady was seven, and skinny dude was eight. It was all very confusing.

"Wait, wait, back up." Denki waved his hands around. "But, I thought you said I'm *nine."*

One nodded, "You are."

"But, then who's he?" Denki gestured frantically to the skinny guy that had introduced himself as Eight. "Because I got the quirk from All Might, not whoever that is."

To his surprise, that made Seven snort, "That *is* All Might, kiddo."

"You see what happens when you flex too much, pipsqueak." Five pulled Eight into a headlock and messed up his hair. "Your own

successor doesn't even recognize you!"

"I, uh, I apologize?" Eight, *All Might,* said sheepishly, trying to fix his hair with limited success. "I try not to show any weakness to the world and this form…"

"Isn't really that bad, all things considered." Four spoke up softly. "But whatever, that's not why we're here."

Denki raised his hand, "Um, why *are* you here? Like I get that you're part of One for All and you're the past holders and all that, but... *why?"*

One sighed, "It's just part of how quirk transfer works. When someone's quirk is pulled out of them, they leave an imprint on it that doesn't go away. Just like your quirk is part of you, you are a part of your quirk."

Denki nodded, trying to keep up, "So, you're all...what? Ghosts?"

Eight coughed, "No, um, I am fairly certain I'm still alive."

"Not if Nedzu has anything to say about it." Seven scolded. "Seriously, Toshi? Right before the combat exercise?"

"We're more like shadows." One interrupted. "Vestiges that encapsulate who we were...and still are, I suppose, just in a different way."

"We're the leftovers, kid." Five shrugged. "And you're stuck with us, so as long as you're all special and able to talk, we may as well get to know you."

"Yeah, kiddo!" Seven smiled kindly. "Tell us about *you."*

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 04.07.2021

Tightrope

Chapter Summary

The afternoon after the training exercise.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Confused Screaming

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki had trouble staying present as he sparred with Shinso at the beach after school. The past 48 hours had felt like a fucking whirlwind even *before* the exercise, but then it got worse when he figured out that not only had Izuku become a *vigilante* since the last time he saw him, but he'd also fucking trained one of the strongest people in their freaking class! Obviously, Kaminari had never said a word about being trained by Viridian, but Katsuki had spent most of last night watching every single video anyone had ever captured of Izuku fighting and he'd picked up enough to recognize his distinct fighting style. Take away the pipes and slingshot, add a taser, and what was left would look exactly like Kaminari had while fighting Yaoyorozu.

They were probably friends. In fact, Katsuki wouldn't be surprised if Denki was closer to Izuku than he'd ever been and he wasn't quite sure how to feel about that. One the one hand, he was glad that Izuku had found a friend who probably treated him as well as he deserved, but on the other, more selfish hand, Katsuki couldn't help but feel like he'd lost something important. He'd messed up and missed out on what probably could have been an amazing lifelong friendship and even if he somehow managed to somehow mend their relationship now, there was nothing he could really do to get those years back.

Shinso shouted triumphantly as he managed to knock Katsuki off his feet for the first time since they'd started sparring an hour ago. He was still smirking as he helped Katsuki up and offered him a bottle of water.

"Not that I'm complaining about being able to beat you, Bakugo, but what's up with you?" Shinso asked after he chugged the entire bottle

in one go. “Your head is someplace else today.”

Katsuki glared at him, “None of your business.”

All of a sudden, his mind went blank and all the tension released from his body like he was a puppet that had just had its strings cut, “Sit down and breathe slowly.”

Despite the fact that he had every intention of cursing Shinso out, Katsuki couldn’t stop his body from obeying. Before he knew it, Katsuki found himself relaxing for the first time in weeks. The stress gradually started to melt away with every order Shinso gave him, but from what he could tell, the exact opposite was happening to Shinso. The longer he kept Katsuki under his hold, the more tense and insecure he became.

It was no wonder those extras at his middle school had decided to target him. Katsuki got the feeling that Shinso could ask him to do anything in this state and he’d probably end up doing it whether he wanted to or not and as much as he hated to admit it, but there were plenty of times in his life when he would have been excited to pound someone with a brainwashing quirk to the ground. At the time, he would have seen it as a way of proving that he was stronger than them, but now it was obviously just discrimination, plain and simple. Shinso could be a dangerous villain with that quirk if he chose to be, obviously, but here he was, forcing Katsuki to meditate and proving that he could use his gifts to save people.

It was badass.

When Shinso finally released his quirk, Katsuki felt like he’d been dumped in cold water as reality came rushing back in. He stretched and glanced toward Shinso, who looked like he was expecting to be screamed at. That wasn’t gonna fly.

“Careful, Eyebags.” Katsuki huffed. “Any longer of that and you were gonna have to explain to my old hag why you had to carry me home snoring. Come on, let’s go another round.”

Shinso narrowed his eyes suspiciously, “You’re not gonna say anything about…you know?”

“What’s there to say?” Katsuki shrugged confidently. “You’re gonna be a hero with that quirk, so you may as well practice it and I needed the break. Now are you gonna keep me waiting or are you gonna spar with me again now that I’m loose.”

Shinso narrowed his eyes, “Why do I get the feeling I’m gonna regret helping you?”

Katsuki grinned back before charging, “Because now you can’t rely on exhaustion to beat me!”

“I have no idea whether I should drink more caffeine or less.” Denki complained.

He was currently sitting on Izuku’s bed, though *sitting* was really more of a loose term. More accurately, he was lying with his entire upper half hanging upside down off the bed while both feet were straight up in the air, repeatedly switching his legs to cross over one another. He hadn’t stopped moving since he’d shown up twenty minutes ago telling him that All Might had officially given him One for All. Not that he ever really stopped moving normally either, but today it looked like he was practically vibrating with energy. He hadn’t managed to stay on one topic for long enough for Izuku to figure out exactly *what* he’d done with his new quirk, though he’d said something about a combat exercise before he’d started rambling about flirting techniques, so he figured the day had been eventful and he’d probably hear about it eventually, once Denki’s brain finished adjusting to his new energy level. He half expected Denki to start glowing like a lightbulb from the sheer amount of electricity that was probably flowing through him right now. He couldn’t imagine that suddenly receiving a new quirk like that would be *comfortable*.

“Well, for the caffeine question, do you need to focus, or do you feel jittery?” Izuku asked. “Or is your body still just adjusting to One for All and nothing is going to help?”

Denki snapped and pointed at him, “Yes. That one. I still can’t believe I caused a UA wide blackout!”

Izuku choked slightly, “You did what?”

“Meh, it was only like half the school.” Denki waved his hand like it was no big deal. “And Nedzu said the backup generator kicked in, so none of the security systems or anything went down and it was no big deal. Half the school just had to have classes outside for the last couple of hours. Mina said it was pretty awesome!”

“Uh…” Izuku couldn’t help laughing as he shook his head. “Denks, that’s kinda a big deal. What were you even trying to do?”

“Magnetize a bomb.” Denki said simply. “Or I guess I was magnetizing myself, not the bomb. I dunno. It was really cool though.”

“You...you magnetized yourself?” Izuku blinked a few times before his jaw dropped. “You used electromagnetism?! That’s so awesome, Denki, congratulations!”

Denki stopped kicking his legs and grinned at him, “Thanks Izu! It was really cool and kinda an accident the first time. It *probably* would have been smarter to not use it on half a wall right off the bat.”

“You...you used it on a wall?!” Izuku’s eyebrows shot up. “Wha...do I even want to know how?”

“I guess it wasn’t *technically* the wall.” Denki frowned. “It was more like what was behind the wall and the wall just got sandwiched in between. I have this classmate, Yaorozou, who’s like super hot and can create anything, but I guess she didn’t think things through cause she used these awesome metal slat things to try and bolt the door shut.”

Izuku winced, “Oof, yeah, I can see that not ending well with you in the room.”

Denki nodded seriously, “It would have been fine against anyone else, but, uh, yeah...way more electricity came out than I was planning on, obviously because, like, One for All, and I tried to pull it back, but then it ended up wrapping around me and boom! I’m a magnet!”

“That has so many possibilities…” Izuku muttered. “Can you repel metal objects as well, or just attract them?”

Denki shrugged, “No idea. I think I can just attract them...maybe? I haven’t tried repelling them.”

“We’ll have to experiment with that then…” Izuku said, pulling out a new notebook. “In All Might, One for All affects his muscles, right?”

“Yeah, it makes him super buff!” Denki flexed. “But I think that’s just the quirk, because the him in my head is, like, a freaking skeleton. I didn’t even recognize him!”

Izuku immediately stopped scribbling, “...what?”

Denki looked at him, “The All Might that One for All put in my head is like, super skinny, he’s not muscular *at all.* And his bangs are all limp

too, does that mean he has muscles in his hair?"

Izuku looked at him in shock. He wasn't quite sure what was more shocking, the fact that Denki suddenly knew about All Might's skinny form, or the fact that the reason he knew about it was not that All Might told him, but that he apparently had a version of All Might living in his head now. Between his research into All for One and what Denki and All Might had told him about One for All, Izuku considered himself somewhat of an expert on quirk transfer at this point, but nothing had ever really come up in his research about versions of the quirk's past holder living in the recipients head, so either this was a One for All thing, or it was something that people didn't talk about in their attempt to pass off the quirk as their own. Either was a distinct possibility at this point.

Izuku exhaled slowly and put his pencil back to the paper, "Is it just All Might, or do you have all the other past holders as well?"

Denki hummed and sat up, "They kept introducing themselves by their numbers, so yeah…I think I've got all of them, or like, leftovers of them anyway. Just whatever they left behind when they passed the quirk onto the next person. I can only talk to them when I'm shorted out though, but they said that's not normal. Apparently I'm not supposed to be able to talk to them at all. "

"The layer that protects you from rejecting the quirk must insulate you from them." Izuku theorized, scribbling frantically. "And you said that All Might's skinny form is the one that showed up, not his muscle form like when he activates his quirk?"

Denki nodded, "Do you think he ever looks like that irl."

"He does." Izuku answered, then realized that he probably shouldn't have answered that quickly, especially since he wasn't really supposed to know that. "Um, what I mean is that he *should,* right? If One for All increased his physical strength, then he would only have those muscles when the quirk was active. Have you noticed any increase in physical strength since getting the quirk?"

Denki frowned and shook his head, "I…I don't think so? I was kinda distracted by the whole magnet thing." He jumped up, grinning as an idea occurred to him. 'But Aizawa-sensei had us do these crazy tests on the first day, and I hadn't gotten the quirk yet so we already have a baseline to compare it to!"

Izuku returned the smile and snapped his notebook shut, "Then let's

see how One for All affects your physical strength. To the park!"

Queen Bee was, excuse the pun, buzzing with nervous energy. Working for All for One had a lot of benefits. She had all the resources she could ever dream of and had her pick of interesting hosts to choose from without having to worry about pesky things like *disappearances* or *medical abnormalities.* She was always getting to meet new people and use them as her playthings and the best part was that her bees never lacked for things to do! It was easy to forget exactly who her employer was until, of course, things started going wrong like they had been lately.

It wasn't her fault! There were a lot of factors and how was she supposed to know that that pesky little vigilante was going to blow up all her bees! Luckily, she'd pumped the doctor's failed experiment with enough poison to level a city, it felt like, so there was no way he'd survived that and, if he had, it would have been in the news. That, however, was one of the only positives to the whole fiasco.

All for One wasn't known for his patience. He would keep a pawn as long as they remained useful to him, but once that was no longer the case, say they had failed at their assigned goals one too many times, then...well, men like All for One didn't bother with little details like severance pay, so it was better to *not* fail. That, rather annoyingly, made her position the *teensiest bit* precarious at the moment.

Again, it wasn't as if any of her failures were her fault! She was doing her best and she thought she'd done quite well at recovering and completing her tasks considering that she was also having to adjust to an entirely new host, and not even one that was her first choice! Still, though, All for One probably wouldn't tolerate any more failures, especially one as major as her bees somehow failing to even hurt Viridian. She would be the first to admit that she'd been distracted duirng the fight and was focusing most of her energy and bees on exterminating the doctor's stupid pet, but when a few of her drones had seen Viridian on the scene, she'd ordered them to sting him too!

But then they hadn't. She was fairly certain it had to do with the way he was hacking into her hive, because she could have sworn that they'd stung him, but those signals have obviously gotten intercepted and switched up somehow, because by the time she'd recovered from losing almost 80% of her hive, which hurt a lot by the way, he was out, about, and apparently completely fine. She took back every single time she'd ever thought he was cute, because now she knew that he

was a complete and utter jerk that was ruining her life!

She wasn't an idiot, she knew what would happen if All for One suspected that Viridian was able to hijack her signals like that without causing the self-destruct to engage, and she rather preferred being alive, thanks. So she'd made up some bullshit about him finding cover and her bees not seeing him. He'd been angry, of course, but her success at getting rid of the experiment had made up for her slip up and he'd decided she was still useful, especially because without her, he would have to find another spy at UA, which would set his plans back even more.

So she was safe, for now, but that would only last for as long as she kept bringing in good information and that would be difficult if people kept destroying all her bees! First, viridian, then that stupid Kaminari boy. Sure, he was cute and kind of ditzy, and she'd actually enjoyed it quite a bit when he'd flirted with her while she was possessing Kohaku, but did he really have to short out half the school and fry a good chunk of her bees along with it?! He was really lucky he was cute.

Thankfully, pretty much everyone had screamed when the lights went out, so her screams of pain blended right in as she felt her bees get electrocuted. She'd only had a few minutes to recover, but what with the sudden darkness and the chaos of All Might ushering them to another training ground to finish the exercise, no one had noticed her acting a bit off. They might have noticed when she took her turn, but her and her partner hadn't actually even *fought,* they'd lost so quickly, so it didn't end up being an issue, which she was grateful for. She was really sick of her bees dying.

It wasn't all bad, though. She had learned the true identity of the *Kacchan* they'd been hearing so much about and now knew to be extra careful when sending her bees around him, because he understood the significance of them and would explode any that got too close. It was inconvenient, but doable, and unfortunately unavoidable if she wanted to keep her cover and, by extension, her life. At the very least, it was better than not having any warning.

The best part of the whole thing though, was the power outage itself. It had knocked out a lot of the cameras inside the school, so it had been child's play to send a few bees to figure out where the teachers kept their schedules and lesson plans and she'd been able to retrieve them while All Might was still trying to regroup the students and corral them to the new training ground. The original plan had been

breaking into the school to get those, of course, but this saved time and effort later, which was always the best way to please the bosses. This way, All for One was happy about that because Shigaraki didn’t have to go and do it himself, and Queen Bee was happy about it because if All for One was happy then she wasn’t at risk of dying a horrible death.

She was excited. Afterall, what girl wouldn't enjoy a field trip?

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 04.09.2021

Bakugo

Chapter Summary

How did *Bakugo* become the cryptid of class 1A?!

Chapter Notes

Art!
Hattie
Pestilence

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Denki grinned and laughed as Sero used his tape to steal Mina's bag before class and stick it to the ceiling as revenge for her melting the pencil he leant her yesterday. He couldn't remember ever clicking so well with anyone besides Izuku and honestly, it was awesome! These guys were more the class clown type, rather than badass nerds like Izuku was, but that didn't mean they were any less awesome.

"If you dumasses keep doing that, Aizawa's gonna catch you and kick your asses." Bakugo yelled. "Save the roughhousing for combat exercises!"

"We're just having a bit of fun, Bakubro, but you're welcome to join in!" Kirishima grinned. "We were planning on stopping before class anyway!"

Bakugo just rolled his eyes, "If you weren't, I'd be concerned you actually had hair for brains."

"Aww, he cares!" Mina teased, poking at Bakugo's cheek. "You act like an asshole, but that's just a front. You're actually like a...hmm, a…?"

"A porcupine?" Sero suggested helpfully.

"No, not cute enough." Mina pouted.

"I am not cute!" Bakugo yelled, slapping Mina's hand away. "Leave me alone."

“I mean, the spikes *kinda* fit.” Kirishima mused. “I was thinking more like a pomeranian, but…”

“Seriously, dumb hair, do you want to die?” Bakugo threatened.

Denki stifled his laughter behind his hand. Bakugo was so easy to rile up, but even if he was loud and acted angry all the time, he was a surprisingly good sport about teasing. Which, of course, gave them all permission to tease him harder. He hadn’t ever really expressed interest in being their friend, but he’d somehow gotten pulled into the group anyway. It was kinda fun.

Denki gasped loudly as an idea occurred to him, “A hedgehog! They’re adorable *and* have spikes!”

“Aww! That’s so cute!” Uraraka squealed as she joined the conversation. “I can just see a little hedgehog getting all grumpy just like Bakugo does!”

“I said I’m not cute!” Bakugo exploded, his face turning a little pink either from anger or embarrassment. “Stop trying to make me something I’m not!”

“Please refrain from comparing our classmates to animals.” Iida reprimanded. “Bakugo is a human, not a hedgehog or a pomeranian no matter how apt those comparisons may be!”

“What did you say, four-eyes?!”

“Guys.” Todoroki’s monotone cut through the chaos. “Aizawa’s coming.”

Denki quickly jumped on the desk to pull Ashido’s bag down and Inasa used his wind to gather the tape into a ball and toss it in the trash while the rest of the class scrambled to get into their seats as quickly as they could. They managed it, but only a split-second before Aizawa strode into the room and raised an eyebrow at them.

“Massive improvement.” He observed. “Maybe you all have potential after all. We have a field trip next week, so make sure your parents sign the forms we emailed you and turn them in. other than that, we have something extremely important to take care of today.”

He glared at them, activating his quirk. Denki wasn’t actually sure *what* his quirk was, just that he used it to be intimidating and it made his eyes turn red, but it still sent a shiver down his spine, like there

was something he was missing. It was kinda creepy, but he had to admit that it was a great way to make sure they were paying attention. It also made them all instantly more terrified of whatever Aizawa thought was *important*.

He swept over the room with his eyes one final time, “You need to pick a class president.”

Denki sighed in relief. That was just normal classroom stuff, nothing major and nothing that would get anyone expelled. Everyone else was raising their hands to volunteer and Denki kinda wanted to do the same, but...well, would anyone want an idiot like him as their class president anyway? Izuku always said he was smart, and Denki would agree, but what if he was only smart on things that he hyper fixated on? What if none of that actually translated over into being a good leader?

Despite his doubts, however, Denki found himself raising his hand. He didn’t feel ready to be the class president, like, at all, but he’d accepted One for All when he hadn’t really felt ready and that was working out just fine, even if it was still a little challenging. Besides, as the ninth holder of One for All, All Might expected him to be the next symbol of peace and how was he supposed to lead the country if he couldn’t even lead a class?

“We should elect the person with the most passion!” Inasa suggested. “That’s who’ll be the best leader!”

“We should do it democratically.” Iida shouted sternly. “What we have now is chaos! We need some sort of organization!”

“I don’t care how you choose.” Aizawa growled inside his sleeping bag. “But please choose quietly.”

Bakugo snorted and rolled his eyes, but the rest of the class seemed chastised enough and stopped yelling, at the very least, but they were still clueless about what to do.

“I think taking a vote is a great idea!” Denki spoke up finally. “I mean, Yaoyorozu can make us a hat and then you just put your choice’s name in it and *boom,* we’ve got our president!”

“If you’re gonna do it by popular opinion, you may as well put a rule against voting for yourself.” Bakugo huffed. “No point in a vote where everyone is just pushing their own interests.”

The class nodded and took a few minutes to write down their choices. Denki wasn't quite sure who he should vote for. Even if he *had* been able to vote for himself, he still probably wouldn't have. There were a lot of good choices. Tsu seemed level headed, Uraraka was pretty nice, and Hagakure had shown that she was capable of commanding attention, but Denki found himself writing Bakugo's name instead. It wasn't like he knew a lot about him, but if he worked with the police like Todoroki had said, then he must know what he was doing and he'd shown both good strategy and leadership during the battle exercise. In a lot of ways, he reminded Denki of Izuku: intelligent and determined, even if they had different ways of showing it.

When Yaoyorozu emptied the hat and tallied the votes, Denki couldn't keep his jaw from dropping. Yeah, sure, he'd thought it'd be cool if people voted for him, but he didn't think anyone actually *would.* He didn't get the highest amount of votes, that honor obviously went to Bakugo, but he was second place with only two votes less.

"Great." Aizawa stood up from his sleeping bag and stretched. "Bakugo is class president and Kaminari is vice president, now onto…"

"I don't want it." Bakugo spoke up.

"What?" Kirishima looked as surprised as Denki felt. "But, dude, you'd be a great class president."

"Dunce face can have it." Bakugo said, a little more firmly. "I'm not being class president and you can't fucking make me."

"But, like, it'll be super good for your popularity!" Hagakure said. "If you wanna be the number one hero…"

"I don't. I'm planning on going underground." Bakugo turned to Aizawa. "That much public attention wouldn't be good for me."

To Denki's surprise, Aizawa nodded, "Alright, Kaminari, you'll be the president and Bakugo will be your vice president. That'll give him leadership experience while still staying mostly out of the public eye. Now, let's get going. We have a lot of material to cover today so turn to page…"

Denki just sat there. *He* was class president?! *Him?!* That...well, he wasn't going to reject it, but he couldn't help but feel grateful that he'd at least have Bakugo around to help out. He hadn't really met anyone who was planning on being an underground hero before,

though, and for some reason that just made Bakugo seem even cooler and more mysterious. To reject a position as class president, though...that took guts.

He'd do his best to make everyone proud. He smiled as he felt One for All humming beneath his skin. He'd be the best class president he could be so that one day, he'd be able to become the symbol of peace.

Shouto hurried to catch up to Kacchan and the other students that seemed to have attached themselves to him as everyone headed out of the classroom, "Hey Kacchan! Wait up!"

"Kacchan?" Mina squealed. "Oh my god! That's so cute!"

"Are you not gonna explode him?" Sero asked incredibly. "I would have thought you'd go by something more...badass."

"Shut it raccoon eyes." Kacchan growled. "You too, packing tape. It's a long story and involves a fucking serial killer, so it *is* badass, alright? Also, it just won't die, so deal with it. Now what do you want Icyhot? Still mad at me for breaking into your stupid mansion or something?"

"Wait, you broke into his mansion?" Kaminari's jaw dropped. "How? When? *Why?* "

"Before the school year started." Shouto answered simply. "And I have my own theories based on the how...Kacchan, is my brother still alive?"

Kacchan just stared at him for a long moment, "Why in the everliving fuck would I know that?"

"Oh…" Shouto put up a wall so he couldn't show any disappointment. "I had just thought…"

"Look, you idiot, just cause I deal with underground info and stuff doesn't mean I know everything." Kacchan groaned. "There's a lot of stuff I have no idea about, mostly because I just don't care, but also because in the underground, if you want info, it's gonna cost you. Money, info, favors, depends on who you're asking. That's the only reason I even went to talk to you in the first place. A contact had info I needed, but was too chicken to break into the number two hero's place himself, so he had me do it for him. End of story, now leave me alone, I got places to be."

“Wait, I wanna know why Todoroki thought you knew his brother.” Kirishima said, putting a hand on Kacchan’s shoulder to make him stay put. “Story time!”

“There’s not a story, dumb hair.” Kacchan glared at him. “And doesn’t your brother live with you or something? I thought I read some article that said he was going to college or whatever.”

“That’s Natsuo.” Shouto wanted to tear his hair out. Back to square one. “We used to have another brother named Touya, but he died in a training accident years ago.”

“Oh.” Mina bit her lip. “Sorry. We didn’t know.”

Shouto shrugged, “It was a long time ago. It’s just that the way Kacchan got into the mansion was a secret passage that only my siblings and I should have known about. I was hoping that Touya was the one who sent him.”

“Nah, I was sent by…” Kacchan stopped for a long moment and Shouto couldn’t help taking the step back when he suddenly started cackling, “Oh my god, that fucking dumass! No wonder he wanted to kill the number two bastard himself!”

“Um...Bakugo?” Kirishima asked hesitantly. “Care to share with the class?”

“No way, it’ll be too fun to hold this over scar-face’s head.” Kacchan grinned. “Not to mention more valuable as blackmail. Besides, what did I tell you? If you want info, you have to earn it.”

Shouto watched in shock as Kacchan simply walked away without so much as a backwards glance. He wasn’t quite sure whether he had his answer or whether he’d just been left with more questions. Probably both.

Mina was lost. She was trying to find the room the police had told them, but this hospital was like a labyrinth! It was probably to help with security, so that any villains wouldn’t be able to find a particular patient if they broke in, but for the moment, it was just making her feel even more anxious and awkward than she had been already and that was pretty difficult considering that this situation was the weirdest thing she’d ever heard of in her life and she wasn’t even 100% sure she wanted to be here. How was someone supposed to react to maybe reuniting with just a *part* of their aunt?

When the police had called their family down to the station, they had just assumed that they'd finally found Auntie Dai's body after all these years. Instead, they had all been handed non-disclosure agreements and told to not discuss what they were about to learn with anyone who was not either a hero, a police officer, or a member of their family. Then they'd been ushered into a small room with a tired looking police officer who introduced himself as detective Tsukauchi and given the most surreal news they'd ever heard.

"Forgive the red tape," Tsukauchi had started, *"but as next of kin, we felt it appropriate to contact you. The situation is ongoing and...well, to put it frankly, a little strange. I assure you, however, that we are doing our best, despite the unprecedented nature of the investigation."*

"Next of kin?" Mina's mom had immediately gasped. *"You found her? You found Daita?!"*

"Not...not exactly." Tsukauchi had said hesitantly. *"Daita Ashido is still technically considered missing, but we are now fairly certain we know which villains took her. It's complicated, but I guess the simplest answer to your question is that we* did *find her, just not all of her."*

"Not all of her?" Mina's dad had sounded as confused as they had all felt. *"What is that supposed to mean?"*

"That's where things get strange." Tsukauchi had sighed. *"The only part of her we managed to find was her quirk."*

The entire conversation after that had been a whirlwind. The detective hadn't gone into the science of all of it, simply said that a villain had taken Auntie Dai's quirk and transferred it into someone else and given them the option to go visit this random person in the hospital. Her parents had immediately pushed back, obviously. They'd gone into the meeting hoping for some sort of closure and gotten the opposite. Honestly, it had been five years since she'd gone missing, so they had all mourned her in their own ways and healed as much as they could. To her parents and the rest of her family, going to see someone who wasn't even *her* just felt like picking the scab off the wound.

It felt that way to Mina too, but she'd been closer to Auntie than anyone else had. She'd taken the favorite niece title and held onto it like a trophy, so when Autie Dai had gone missing she'd taken it the hardest. Sure, she'd only been ten, but that had made it even harder. She still remembered realizing that they'd never go to the park

together again or that her aunt would never be able to really teach her how to skate. She'd locked herself in her room for a solid week and had only come out because her dad melted the door off its hinges. It had been rough.

So maybe that was why she'd taken the detective up on his offer to see her aunt's quirk. Even though she knew she'd probably regret it, she had asked the detective which hospital and room the stranger was in, hoping that just maybe there was enough of her aunt left to reclaim some of what they'd lost. It was stupid and she felt ridiculous and the fact that she couldn't find the stupid room wasn't helping!

Thankfully, there weren't a lot of other people in the halls, just a few nurses and other patient's family's to witness her failure. Of course, that small comfort went away and she had to resist the urge to melt through the floor when she turned a corner and saw Bakugo headed her way.

"Racoon eyes?" Bakugo looked just as surprised to see her as she was embarrassed to see him. "What are you doing here?"

"Well, you see, it's kinda complicated…" Mina smiled awkwardly. Bakugo was a hero student, and he worked with the police, so she was pretty sure he was *technically* allowed under their NDA, but he'd still probably think she was crazy. "I'm...well, I'm kinda here to see my aunt. What are you doing here."

"Visiting a friend." Bakugo scowled. "Trying to convince him to wake the fuck up."

"Oh, cool." Mina nodded. "Awesome, well, um, I'd better, uh, get going, so I'll leave you to your visit."

Bakugo narrowed his eyes, "What's up with you? You're normally all bubbly and shit."

"Well, I…" Mina groaned, her face turning a darker shade of pink. "I'm lost."

Bakugo snorted, "Good job. I've been visiting here for a couple weeks now and spent a couple days here after a villain attack, so maybe I can help. What room are you looking for?"

"Uh...270? I think?" Mina checked the paper that Tsukauchi had given her. "Yeah, 270!"

To her surprise, Bakugo just froze and looked at her suspiciously, “Are you sure? Didn’t you say you’re going to visit your aunt? The patient in 270 is a guy.”

“Well, you see, that’s where it gets kinda weird!” Mina chuckled awkwardly. “The police said they didn’t really find *her,* they just found...well, it kinda sounds ridiculous…”

“They just found her quirk.” Bakugo said quietly.

“I know it sounds ridiculous…Wait.” Mina stared at him. “How did you know that?”

Bakugo stared at the floor for a long moment, seeming to debate something with himself before turning on his heel, “Follow me.”

Not knowing what else to do, Mina obeyed. Bakugo was a complete mystery. He was really rude, but even Aizawa and the police seemed to respect him, and he completely blew them all away in the training exercise. But then, just when Mina and their classmates thought they were starting to make sense of him, he’d drop a bomb like casually revealing that he’d broken into Todoroki’s mansion, or do something like show up at the hospital and know exactly why she was there. There was just so much about him that seemed at odds with each other and Mina didn’t think she’d ever be able to make sense of him.

He led her down a few hallways and within a minute or two, he was pushing open the door to room 270, holding it open to her as he addressed the person in the bed, “Hey, sleeping beauty! You got another visitor!”

He waved Mina into the room and gestured toward the patient on the bed. Mina didn’t recognize him and had no idea how *he* could have Auntie Dai’s quirk, but she felt herself drawn to him anyway out of morbid curiosity. How much of her aunt could even be left if Mina couldn’t even recognize her?

Bakugo spoke gently, like he understood how hard it was for her to be here, “This is Ogawa, a friend of mine. It looks like his new acid ink is something he got from your aunt.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 04.11.2021

Awakening

Chapter Summary

Exactly what it says on the tin.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Hattie
Pelestance
Shroomz
Time
Taiyo
HurricaneFox

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Ogawa was frustrated. He hated being in a coma. Most of the time, it was just like sleeping, and maybe it was because of how badly the doctors had messed with his brain and body, but there were times when he could have sworn that he could hear what was happening outside. It was weird and trippy and felt like he was listening to things from six feet under water, but it was better than being six feet underground. Too many times, the had occurred to him that he was just so desperate for *something* that he was imagining it, but if it was real, then Bakugo was his most frequent visitor aside from who he assumed were doctors and nurses. He couldn't really *understand* what he was saying, but it was comforting to imagine that it was something along the lines of *if you don't wake up soon, I'll personally make sure you never do.* It seemed like something Kacchan would say.

The only good thing that had come from the whole neverending sleep thing was that he had had a lot of time to get to know the shadows in his head. Well, they weren't really *shadows* anymore, more like blurry figures, like he was looking at his own reflection in a foggy mirror after taking a shower or something, and they were getting more and more solid the more he got used to them. They still couldn't talk to each other or anything, but he was getting more used to the way they communicated for now. He figured he may as well get to know them and maybe even become friends, since he wasn't stupid enough to

think that whatever Sensei had done to him could be reversed. This was his life now, and he just had to get used to it.

The shadows weren't ever very active during those times when Bakugo visited. Sure, they were curious, but they didn't know him, not like Ogawa did, so they took a backseat and let him sit and enjoy the company as much as he could when he wasn't sure the visits were even real. It wasn't much, but it was consistent, which was what made the current visit so surprising.

The first surprising thing actually had absolutely nothing to do with the shadows. It was that Bakugo brought a visitor, or at least an unfamiliar voice, but that shouldn't have been a big deal. It *wasn't* a big deal! Except for the fact that the voice was only unfamiliar to *him*.

His bolder shadow reacted immediately and he felt almost overwhelmed by a *wall* of eagerness. He felt like he was practically jumping out of his skin and bits and pieces of emotions and even memories that weren't him flashed through his mind. He didn't know whether he should try to calm down or just roll with it, but he didn't seem to have much of a choice in the matter. His shadow was getting louder and more anxious and Ogawa literally felt like he was about to explode as they fought to get out or wake up or whatever they were trying to do.

The unfamiliar voice said something else and Ogawa was overwhelmed by a new wave of fighting and emotion from his shadow. There was so much energy that there was no place it could go, so it just went *out*.

Ogawa gasped as more memories that weren't his flowed through him and he suddenly knew exactly who was visiting, both recognizing and not recognizing her at the same time, *"Mina..."*

Mina stared at the guy in the bed in shock. She swore that he had never seen this Ogawa guy before in her life, but he pretty obviously knew her, and was apparently excited enough to see her that it was enough to wake him up out a coma. If it had actually been Auntie Dai in the bed, she would have been ectatic, but as it was...she didn't know how to feel. Was this whole thing supposed to creepy? Because it kinda felt a little bit creepy.

Unlike her, Bakugo apparently knew exactly how to feel, because he was pissed, "Waht teh fuck? You asshole! I saved your ass from those

freaking bees and 've been coming here for weeks and you don't even flinch, but this stupid pink extra comes and all of sudden you're singing and dancing like you got a goddamn golden ticket or something?! Seriously?!"

"It wasn't me, man." The stranger groaned. "It was...alright, well, it's kinda complicated and I don't really know how to explain. I swear though, it's nothing personal! If I could have woken up, I would've!"

"Uh huh." Bakugo scoffed. "Sure. Well, at least one of your quirks apparently cares about other people more than you do."

"Other…?" Ogawa's eyes widened. "You know about them?"

"Iz…" Bakugo stopped. "Viridian figured it out, but honestly it was pretty fucking obvious! I mean, you come back and can all of a sudden produce acid?! Like, obviously you're not that talented, so it must've come from somewhere."

"Aww." He grinned. "You could've just said you miss me!"

Bakugo rolled his eyes, "As if, you idiot. I can't believe you woke up for Racoon eyes and not for me!"

"Racoon eyes?" Ogawa looked over at her and took a sharp breath, "Mina. I...wow, this is really weird. I'm so sorry, you don't even know me, and uh, I guess I don't know you either? Sorry, this is awkward and it's really kinda complicated…"

"Auntie Dai?" Mina didn't know what else to say. This guy obviously wasn't her aunt, but at the same time, Bakugo was right. There had to be *something* left of her to make Ogawa wake up when Mina walked in. And maybe that was why he recognized her, even though they'd never met. It was probably just wishful thinking but at the same time…

"Uh, I dunno." Ogawa shrugged. "That feels right, somehow. I think they recognize you."

"They?" Bakugo asked. "Like, I figured you had her quirk or something, but are you telling me you can actually, like, tell who your quirk came from?"

"More like feel them and kinda see them?" Ogawa frowned. "I don't have a lot of detail yet, but maybe that'll change? Kumo said that I should get to know…"

Ogawa's eyes widened in panic and he tried to stand, only to almost fall to the ground and have to be caught by Mina and Bakugo, "Kumo! He's still there and I don't know how long...what if they already...we have to get him out!"

"Slow down. You've been poisoned, you idiot and even a little bit of that shit put me out of commision for days." Bakugo tried. "Let's start again. Kumo. Is that the guy you wanted me to save?"

Ogawa nodded frantically, but reluctantly let them sit him back down on the bed, "I...He's...He was there longer than me. I don't know who he is...was...ugh!"

"Alright." Bakugo nodded. "How do we find him? Can you describe him or what?"

"Uh, he's...older than me?" Ogawa frowned. "Probably late twenties or something? Um he...he had a cloud quirk, like, the guy basically had water vapor for hair, but they did the same thing to me that they did to him. Uh, they...like now, it's all dark and stuff? But they didn't tell him what it did, so I don't...You have to save him! We have to go! Now! Before they move him!"

He tried to stand again, but Bakugo just pushed him back onto the bed as doctors came rushing into the room, "Patient's awake but vitals are elevated! Get out of here, kids!"

"What?!" Bakugo seemed almost ready to fight the doctors. "Are you kidding? He was about to tell us the…"

Mina hurriedly tugged on his arm, "Come on and let the doctors do their work, we can always come back after the field trip tomorrow and talk to him!"

"Your presence is obviously distressing him." One of the doctors warned. "Don't worry, it's fairly common in coma patients, but for right now, we naee to make sure he doesn't slip back to sleep, so any unnecessary stresses need to get out!"

"Fine, fine, we're going!" Bakugo growled. "But don't think this conversation is over, Tentacle freak! You gotta help me take these monsters down."

The doctors pushed them out of the room and slammed the door before Ogawa could respond, and they just sat in silence, staring at the door as Mina tried her best not to go into shock, "Uh...ok? That

just happened, I guess."

"Fuck this." Bakugo snarled and started stalking away. "I'm gonna find those bastards and make them pay."

Kacchan knew that he should be anywhere besides on the streets right now. He should be at home, or at the hospital, or even at Izuku's because the nerd probably knew more than he did at this point and would probably be able to figure out the stupid identity of Ogawa's mystery friend a lot faster than he could, but he was so restless and angry that he needed to do *something,* and at the moment, that something was pounding the pavement and chasing half a lead. So, here he was, reaching out to his contacts and focusing to the point that he was distracted and didn't care about anything except finding the villain factory so he could tear their entire operation to the ground.

Which was probably how he'd ended up with a knife to his throat. Figures.

"Ooh, you're the hero that Mr. Stainy was talking about huh?" The girl holding the knife was far too excited to be holding a deadly weapon. "You're name's Kacchan, right? That's super duper cute, but you know you'd be even cuter if you just let me cut you up a little bit!"

"No way." Kacchan growled. "Get away from me you freaking serial killer kinnie."

"Aww. That's no fun."

The girl pouted and moved her knife, but not before knicking Katsuki's skin, making him hiss as a drop of blood started sliding down his throat. When he saw the way she was eyeing it, he scrambled back and hurried to wipe it away. If her quirk was anything like Stain's he didn't want her anywhere near his blood.

"What do you want?" Katsuki growled. "I'm kinda busy and I don't have time to play around with psychopaths."

"Oh, I just wanted to introduce myself!" The girl grinned, showing off her fangs. "I'm Himiko Toga! I love Mr. Stainy and I wanted to see the cute hero he was talking about! You're just as cute as I imagined, but you should…"

“I’m not gonna let you cut me up.” Katsuki scowled. “Fine, you’ve met me. Whoop-de-doo! Now leave me alone, I got places to be!”

He stalked away, but the girl simply skipped after him, “ooh! Are you investigating that big attack tomorrow? I don’t really *do* big groups, not nearly enough blood to go around, but it sounded interesting.”

Katsuki stopped in his tracks, “What?”

Toga giggled, “Oh! You don’t know?”

Katsuki looked at her suspiciously, “Maybe I know, maybe I don’t. Why don’t you tell me and let’s find out?”

“Hmm, I *could.* ” Toga hummed. “But that’d be no fun! I could make a trade though! You seem like fun, so I don’t want you dying *too* early, especially when I’m not there to see it!”

“Gee thanks.” Katsuki drawled. “Now what sort of a trade.”

“Your blood!” Toga grinned! “Can I have a taste? Pretty please?”

“What?” Katsuki reared back. “Fuck no!”

Toga pouted, “Fine. Then can I cut you? Just the teeniest little bit? I promise I won’t even hit any major arteries!”

Katsuki couldn’t believe he was actually considering this. Let the creepy Stain simp cut him up or what? Know that there was an attack that he could have helped the police prepare for and didn’t even know enough to help? This could be a trick, but for some reason Toga didn’t really seem like the type who thought it was fun to lie. She’d be more likely to tell the truth in a suitably cryptic way to get a rise out of him and, unfortunately for him, it was working.

“Fine.” He spat out. “Just get it over with already.”

Toga’s face lit up and Katsuki swallowed hard as he tried not to regret his decision. It was just a little pain, right? It’s not like he hadn’t put Izuku through worse. It was all just a part of being a hero.

Toga’s knife flashed out quickly, but she took her time giving him a long cut across his jaw. Katsuki held back his flinch, but jumped back when she went to lick the wound, “Don’t even think about it, blood freak. That’s not what we agreed on.”

Toga pouted again, “But it looks so good on you!”

Katsuki glared at her, “Are you gonna give me the info or not?”

“Fine.” Toga heaved a heavy sigh. “You should probably skip school tomorrow. There’s an organization gathering up a bunch of people for tomorrow, and I’m not sure exactly where and when they’re gonna do stuff, but I *might* be able to remember more if you let me have a taste!”

Katsuki shook his head. As much as he wanted the info, the risk was too high. He had no idea what this Toga girl could do if she got her hands on his blood and until he knew that, there was no way he could let her have that sort of power over him. He already knew there was going to be a large scale attack and that it was probably going to be enough.

It had to be.

“See you around, blood bitch.” Katsuki said, stalking off. “Oh, and if you *ever* try to hold a knife to my throat one more time, you’re never gonna be *cute* again.”

The only response he got as he walked away was a giggle that he knew would haunt his nightmares. Tomorrow was going to be a long day.

Chapter End Notes

> Next Update Expected: 04.23.2021
> Life's been crazy, so I'm going to be taking the next rotation off to adjust. My update schedule will probably be getting revamped when I return, and if inspiration strikes, I might drop a chapter early.
> Enjoy the cliffhanger while I'm gone!

Aggression

Chapter Summary

The USJ

Chapter Notes

Art!
Hattie X
llxcnxxrb
xXJoshOwoXx

Memes!
X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shouta was just finishing up his reports for the night and was looking forward to a few well-deserved hours of sleep when Bakugo slammed open the door to the police station. He didn't even say hello to Sansa at the desk before storming back to Tsukauki's station. Shouta heaved a heavy sigh and pushed the last of his paperwork away, "Katsuki Bakugo, it is literally the middle of the night. Is there any reason this couldn't wait until school tomorrow? And what happened to your face?"

"None of your business, hobo." Bakugo scoffed, "And maybe because by the time school starts it might be too late?"

"I don't know it's pretty late right now." Amplifier teased. "What are you doing out on a school night?"

"Got a lead." Bakugo grumbled. "I...fine, long story short Ogawa woke up, I went out to look into something he told me, and I got stopped by a villain who *warned me not to go to school tomorrow.* Do you idiots see why maybe I wouldn't want to just sit on that info?"

Tsukauchi stared at him, "He said *what?"*

"She, actually. Introduced herself as Himiko Toga." Bakugo rolled his eyes. "She's a creepy psychopath, but where the info came from isn't as important as what we're gonna do about it. From what Toga said, it's an organization and they've recruited a *lot* of people."

“Toga?” Shouta groaned. “Problem child, what is it with you and attracting serial killers?!”

“Maybe it’s just my winning personality.” Bakugo rolled his eyes. “Now, she wouldn't tell me exactly when or where, but I’m thinking the target’s at least in the same neighborhood as UA, if not the school itself, and she said *tomorrow,* so…”

“So that at least gets us a window, which is better than nothing.” Tsukauchi sighed. “Any idea why she volunteered the info?”

“It came up.” Bakugo shrugged. “She sought me out and kept going on and on about how Stain thinks very highly of me and all that crap, then when she realized I didn’t know about the attack…”

He mumbled something that Shouta couldn’t quite make out, “What was that?”

“Ugh, she said something about how I was too cute to die without her watching or some shit!” Bakugo scowled, a slight blush on his face. “I don’t remember exactly what she said, but it was creepy, alright?!”

“Aww!” Amplifier held her hands over her heart. “Our widdle hero gets shy when girls flirt with him!”

“Amplifier, do I need to remind you that Toga is known for *killing* most of her crushes?” Tsukauchi rubbed at the bridge of his nose. “But that checks out, actually. Warning you about an attack she wouldn’t be a part of is exactly something she would do, which unfortunately means that this info is probably trustworthy. Wonderful.”

“I already told you that.” Bakugo crossed his arms. “Now what are we gonna do? Cancel school or something?”

“Only as a last resort.” Shouta said. “I’ll talk to Nedzu, but the PR nightmare canceling classes this late would cause means that we’ll need to look at our options first.”

“We’ll start by talking to the commission and getting more heroes stationed in the area for the day.” Tsukauchi said. “UA has the highest security around, so once all the students are inside the gates, they should be safe. The biggest issue will be before and after school, and maybe during lunches?”

“It’s easier to make students stay on campus for lunch than it is to cancel class.” Shouta said, grabbing his phone to call Nedzu. “Go get

some sleep, Kacchan, the rest of us aren't going to be able to."

Amplifier stopped him before he could get too far, "Oh, and you said Ogawa woke up already? That's amazing!"

"Yeah." Bakugo huffed. "At least he told me who it was that he wanted to save. Some guy named Kumo. Used to have a cloud quirk or something like that, but Ogawa said those monsters put them both through the same thing, so that's probably not the case anymore. Whatever, see you tomorrow, losers."

Shouta froze. It...he was dead. Had been for ten years now. There was no way he was alive and even if that *was* possible, All for One wouldn't have any logical reason to hold onto him for this long. It had to be a coincidence, that was the only possibility that made sense, but what if it wasn't?

By the time he managed to shake himself out of his stupor, Bakugo was already out the door and Tsukauchi was looking at him with concern, "Eraserhead? Are you alright?"

"I'm fine." Shouta took a deep breath. He could worry about Shirakumo later after he made sure that none of his students followed his example and died before they could graduate. "Come on, we've got brats to protect."

Katsuki was starting to relax, if only slightly. The trip to school had been extraordinarily uneventful, even if there were more heroes signing autographs than usual, and Tsukauchi was right about UA's security being practically impregnable. The increased hero presence outside would be able to stop any attack on the gates before it really began and even if there *was* an attack, it would be at the main school, not at some building tucked away in the far corner of campus. That was probably why All Might wasn't coming on the field trip: they needed their most powerful hero close and at the ready for if and when the attack happened, even if the official reason for his absence as *special heroic obligations.* Katsuki stared out the window and half-listened to his classmates' conversions as they made their way to wherever their rescue exercise was.

"Hey, Kaminari, I've been meaning to ask." Jiro leaned over the seat to talk to dunce face. "When we were preparing for the exercise, you said you didn't have any long range attacks, but I'd say magnetism is pretty long range, don't you think?"

“Uh…that’s kinda a new application of my quirk.” Kaminari stuttered out. “I knew about it! Obviously! I, uh, just didn’t mention it because I hadn’t had time to practice, you know? I didn’t think I’d be able to rely on it, but then adrenaline kicked in, so…”

Katsuki rolled his eyes. Izuku had probably come up with the idea during one of his ramblings and they just hadn’t gotten around to trying it yet. When they’d been kids, Izuku had had a million ideas of how to use Explosion better, but most of the time Katsuki’s problem wasn’t that he was too busy, it was that he was too stubborn. He should probably ask the nerd for some tips now that he was learning not to be an idiot.

The training facility was excessively large, but then again, that seemed to be a trend at UA. Thirteen was already waiting outside and Katsuki couldn’t help a small grin at the way Uraraka fangirled over one of her favorite heroes. He had the thought that Izuku would probably have done the exact same thing, but with how often Viridian worked with heroes, he might not freak out the same way he would have when they were little kids. It was just one more thing that Katsuki just honestly didn’t know about him anymore.

After Thirteen led them all inside, they lectured them on the harmful potential of their quirks, a subject that Katsuki was all too familiar with. He didn’t tune them out, but he did take the time to look over the facility, just so he knew what he was walking into. There were multiple disaster zones, probably under the teachers’ control, and each of them housed a different type of disaster that they would face in the field. It was good that they were focusing on rescue and not just combat. It would help them all be better, more rounded heroes. But with how much UA had obviously spent on this building, he hadn’t been expecting any electrical glitches.

The lights flickered slightly before going out and he glanced toward Kaminari, but he seemed just as confused as everyone else, “Hey! It wasn’t me this time, I swear!”

“It’s probably residual issues from the last blackout.” Uraraka suggested. “My parents work construction and they’ve had problems like that before when fuses have blown out and stuff.”

“I don’t think…” Thirteen said hesitantly.

Katsuki’s eye caught on something odd near the fountain and he vaguely heard the others speculating that it was all part of the

exercise, but with Toga's warning, he wasn't about to count on that. These were the villains he'd been warned about. Somehow, they'd gotten inside without having to pass through the gate and chosen to attack a small class, rather than the main school. Katsuki was about to shift into a fighting stance when the small spot of purple mist expanded and he realized *who* was coming through.

"Stand back!" Eraser said. "Those are…"

"You have got to be fucking kidding me!" Katsuki screamed. He stalked forward, causing a good third of the villains to instinctively take a step back as they recognized him. "Seriously?! What the fuck do you godamn idiots think you're doing?! If you're gonna do illegal shit, at least be fucking smart about it! Attacking UA?! The hotbed for both heroes and hero students?! Seriously?!"

One of the villains, some creepy-ass skinny dude with hands all over him who apparently thought he was the leader, gaped at him, "What...what are you...? Kurogiri! What is this NPC doing?!"

"Shut it extra!" Katsuki barked and made a beeline towards two of the villains in particular. "And you two! Maki? Akiko? I thought you were better than this! You guys were doing so fucking well too! Weren't you guys gonna leave all this shit behind for good?!"

"Well, um…" Akiko stammered and looked at the ground, her pigtails going limp. "You see, it's kinda complicated and one thing led to another and…"

"Tell you didn't go crawling back to that bitch-ass boyfriend of yours." Katsuki pointed at her accusingly. "You promised that you were dumping his ass for good this time!"

"Kacchan…" Maki started.

Katsuki whipped around to face him, "And you, huh? What's your excuse? I thought you were trying to make a nice life for that girlfriend of yours!"

It was odd seeing someone as large as Maki trying to make himself small. Even though he was wearing a full face mask, Katsuki could assume he looked just as embarrassed and discombobulated as Akiko did, "Um, well, I mean, with an ugly quirk, it was more difficult than I thought to make ends meet and.."

"You think I don't fucking know that?" Katsuki said. "You think I

haven't talked to enough of these extras to know how much discrimination can screw people over? Not to mention that I've been on the other side of this, remember? I helped perpetuate those stereotypes for god's sake! But if you're gonna return to a life of crime or whatever, at least pick one that's not gonna get you arrested!"

Denki watched open-mouthed as Bakugo stopped an entire horde of actual real-life villains by giving them a tongue lashing. It was freaky enough that he had the courage to just straight-up yell at a group of villains that were probably there to attack them, but what was really insane was that *the villains were actually listening to him!* A good third of them were looking at the floor like scolded children and some of the others were whispering frantically to each other.

"They...they know him." Jiro said numbly. "The ones who don't recognize him are asking whether it's *that* Kacchan or not. Apparently it is."

Denkii turned back to watch as Bakugo kept laying into the villains, "Why would you ever think this was a good idea?!"

The villains he was talking to muttered something in response that made Bakugo roll his eyes, "Yeah and let me guess, a good chunk of that *excellent pay* was gonna come after the job. You can't tell me you actually fell for that crap!" Bakugo gestured to the man with creepy hands all over his body who seemed to be the head villain. "Take one look at that guy and tell me that he's not bitch-ass broke and living in his parent's basement! He isn't intending to pay you because you're all gonna get caught!"

"Is..Is he roasting the villains?" Uraraka asked.

Aizawa heaved a tired-sounding sigh, "Let's use the distraction for what it is. Everyone get out the doors and start making your way back to UA. I'll stay with Kacchan and make sure he doesn't do anything even *more* stupid."

"But…" Iida started to argue, but Denki cut him off as Aizawa ran down the stairs to assist Bakuko.

He was the class president and he really didn't know what exactly he was supposed to do in this situation, but he *did know* that he was supposed to keep his classmates safe, "If we stick around, we're just more targets to distract Thirteen and Aizawa. Also, the alarms aren't going off, so we need to find a way to contact the school and let them

know we're being attacked! Iida, you run ahead."

He started urging everyone forward. The power was out and the doors were electric, so he could probably power them himself and if that didn't work, then hopefully his magnetism would be strong enough to tear them off the hinges. He had to get everyone out and keep them safe. This really wasn't what he'd had in mind when Aizawa had mentioned a rescue exercise.

Kacchan didn't have a plan, he was just disappointed and angry, but it was working. Maki and Akiko as well as a good number of the other villains seemed to be realizing how idiotic attacking UA was and were looking at the ground, embarrassed by their own studipidty while others were nodding along with Katsuki's rant and finally starting to see he had a point. The weird purple mist they'd come through was still covering the plaza, which gave him an idea.

"You know what? Just get outta here." Katsuki huffed in frustration. "Maybe you'll get lucky and the heroes'll just chalk this whole thing up to momentary insanity."

It was a few long moments before a few started turning around and heading back into the portal that had brought them. He turned to Maki and Akiko, who wilted under his glare.

"Sorry, Kacchan." Maki grumbled as he turned around. "We didn't think it'd be your class, but still..."

"Yeah, sorry." Akiko added. "Uh, see you later, yeah?"

Katsuki gave a sharp nod, "You better count on it."

She winced, but turned around and followed Maki and the smart ones away. Katsuki stared after them, trying not to show any shock on his face as he realized just how many villains had taken him up on his offer. He hadn't been expecting that to actually work, not that he wasn't realeved it had.

"Cheater!" A yell from beside him was the only warning he got before the creepy hand guy launched himself at him. "Kurogiri! Keep our party from leaving!"

"If their hearts are not in it, they are more likely to betray us to the heroes than to fight for our cause." The mist said. "Our remaining forces are stronger now that the weak links are gone, young

Shigaraki."

Katsuki warily watched as Shigaraki scratched his neck. He'd been lucky to dodge that first attack, especially since he had no idea what his quirk was or what those hands had to do with it, and he wasn't looking forward to what would happen if Shigaraki decided he *was* a cheater after all. So far, it looked like this Kurogiri mist guy was the dad-friend and Shigaraki was the leash kid, but he'd been a leash kid, he knew how easy it was to blow through those limits without looking back, so he needed to be ready to fight.

A loud crash sounded near the entrance and Shigaraki swore, "Kurogiri, you useless...if you weren't our exit gate, I'd dust you right now! Stop those brats from escaping! I'll wreck the greifer. Nomu!"

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 04.26.2021

New Update Schedule:
Monday: Viridian
Tuesday: Deku
Wednesday: Cheat Code
Thursday: Mastermind
Friday: Viridan

Nomu

Chapter Summary

The USJ continues

Chapter Notes

Art!
Mae
Camb
That's so Yikes
D4rkCh13f73n
Julie-O
Ginger-bread-cow

Cosplay!
@otaku.elf.child

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X
More Memes at End!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shouta was either going to expel this kid or give him an award. Maybe both. On the one hand, it was completely idiotic for him to run *toward* the villains and start chewing them out, but on the other hand, *it was working.* Only about a third of the villains had turned around and left, though, which meant that he was left to fight through the rest of them as Bakguo faced down the leaders. Luckily so far, they'd been in too much shock to be able to do anything, but Shouta wasn't stupid. He knew it was only a matter of time until they snapped out of it and when they did, they'd be pissed.

There was a loud crash from near the entrance and the leader's body language changed. He scratched at his neck and hissed something to the mist warper that Shouta couldn't quite catch. The warper disappeared in the blink of an eye and the leader turned to glare at Bakugo, "Nomu! Incapacitate him!"

Shouta had no clue who *Nomu* was, he hadn't ever heard of that villain before, but now they had orders to hurt his student and Shouta was swamped by cannon fodder and couldn't get to him. The only thing he *could* do was erase the villain's quirk, but he had no idea

what they even looked like, so his only option was to activate his quirk in Bakugo's general direction while being careful not to erase Explosion. Bakugo didn't have any good options either. Not knowing where the attack would be coming from, he'd launched himself into the air, probably hoping to get out of the mystery villain's reach.

It wasn't enough.

Nomu must have had a speed quirk or at least a strength quirk that allowed him to move with superhuman speed because when he entered the area where Shouta was activating his quirk, he slowed down enough to be visible, but that was it. The villain was giant and even without his quirk, he was strong enough to pluck Bakugo from the air by one leg like it was nothing. There was an audible snap and Bakugo screamed.

"Kacchan!" Shouta hissed as he took a blow to his side. He'd been so busy erasing Nomu's quirk that he'd only been half focusing on the villains attacking *him.* He quickly wrapped his scarf around his newest attacker and tossed them away. He heard another snap and tried to reach Bakugo, only for three other villains to block his path. He growled and shifted his stance. His student was in danger and he was done playing around.

Denki grinned as the door flew off its hinges and rocketed toward them, then panicked as he realized that meant that it was about to hit him. He rushed to shut off his quirk, but even without actively being pulled toward him, the door still had momentum so Denki braced himself for impact. He heard a loud clang and hesitantly peaked one eye open, only to open them wide when he saw Kirishima standing in front of him with his arms outspread, the metal off the door moulding slightly around his body from the force of the impact.

"Hey dude." He grinned as he pushed the door to the floor. "It was pretty manly of you to open the door for us."

Denki let out a nervous huff, "Yeah. And it's pretty manly of you to, you know, save my life?"

"Not so fast."

Denki looked up and froze when he realized one of the villains was standing right in front of them, blocking the path to the opening. The guy was made out of the same mist that they'd seen down in the plaza, so he must have a warping quick. At least that explained how

he'd gotten past them without anyone noticing him, but it didn't make him any easier to fight.

"My name is Kurogiri and we are the league of villains." The mist man introduced. "We came here looking to kill All Might, but it appears that our plans have been interrupted. No matter. That does not change your fate."

"No, but passion might!" Inasa yelled. "What'll happen if that mist of yours is blown away?!"

"Inasa! No!"

No one realized that Thirteen had their arm outreached to activate their quirk until it was too late to do anything about it and Denki felt like he was watching a train wreck in slow motion. In the split second that it took Kurogiri to pull his mists tightly around them to protect himself from the gusts, Denki thought he saw some kind of armor under the gas, but he didn't have time to think about it before everything went wrong. The villain was mostly unaffected by Inasa's winds, but Thirteen's attack was blown wildly off course and started heading straight for where Mina was standing.

Denki's entire being was screaming *danger, danger, danger,* and it was so overwhelming that he couldn't even move. His classmates' screams sounded too far away as he watched Black Hole rush toward Mina. There was nothing he could do.

Thankfully, his classmates had a little more presence of mind. At the very last moment a tongue wrapped around Mina's waist and Tsu pulled her out of the way. Black Hole continued forward and moments later, the fake tree she'd been standing in front of was sucked into dust. The wind cut out as did Black Hole as Inasa and Thirteen deactivated their quirks.

"Leave the villain to Thirteen!" Denki yelled. "They've got this! They'll distract him, but we gotta get outta...here…?"

The class stopped in their tracks and he gulped when he saw the open doorway...or what *should* have been the open doorway, if it hadn't been completely blocked by a giant swarm of angry bees.

"Um...Kouda?" Sero took a step back. "Please tell me your quirk works on insects."

Kouda's eyes widened and he shook his head frantically, "I...insects

are…they're too scary!"

"But your quirk *does* work on them?" Uraraka latched onto the possibility.

Hesitantly, Kouda nodded, "But…"

"But you're a UA student!" Uraraka pumped her fist. "You've got all of us and the teachers backing you up! You can do this! Plus Ultra!

The class joined in the cheer and Kouda took a shaky breath, "P-plus ultra."

Denki glanced back at Thirteen and Kurogiri as Kouda started talking to the bees. Without the students in the way, Thirteen had managed to move the fight a little further from the door and was keeping Kurogiri from attacking the students, but it was clear that they were on the defensive and wouldn't be able to hold him off for long. They were running out of time.

"Kouda dude." Kirishima said. "Hurry it up!"

"I…I can't!" Kouda squeaked.

"Yes, you can!" Uraraka yelled. "We believe in you!"

"No! I mean, my…my quirk's not working!" Kouda shook. "They're not…they're *kinda* bees, but not. They're like robots or something!"

Denki heard a cry behind them and whipped around just in time to see Thirteen collapse, the back of their costume torn open from the effects of their own quirk.

"It's too bad you're a rescue hero." Kurogiri said smoothly. "Combat heroes have better situational awareness."

Inasa looked at Kirishima, then nodded in determination, "We'll distract him. You guys figure out a way past those bugs!"

Denki swallowed, "But…how…? Robots…robots are made of metal…magnets…electic… Everybody stand back and hold onto something if you're wearing any metal!"

Everyone rushed to anchor themselves as Kaminari activated One for All and started wrapping the energy around himself. He could feel the wind picking up as Inasa and Kirishima fought the warper, but he didn't pay it any mind as he focused on attracting the bees. There was

a split second where he thought his desperate plan wouldn't work, but then the angry buzzing got louder as the warm tried to resist being pulled away from the doorway. Just getting them out of the doorway, however, wouldn't be enough, so he *really* hoped the swarm was tightly gathered enough for his idea to work.

"Improvised special move…" Kaminari took the electricity wrapped around his arm and let it flow out until it connected with the nearest bee. *"Bug Zapper!"*

At least one of the girls screamed as a wave of bright electricity arced its way through the swarm and the fried bees fell lifeless to the floor. The bees that had escaped the attack almost immediately started swarming again, moving to block the door again before everyone could get out.

"We're not all going to be able to make it before they swarm again." Momo yelled. "Iida, you're the fastest. You need to get to campus and tell the teachers what's going on!"

"I can't just leave you here!" Iida protested. "Running would be shameful!"

"Are you sure he's even fast enough?!" Mineta cried. "Those villains have a warp quirk! You can't outrun that, are you crazy?!"

"I…" Iida looked between his classmates and the bees, hesitating until Kirishima came running up to them.

"We're out of time." He panted. "Inasa's distracting the warp guy, but he's not playing around anymore. Whatever you guys are planning, you gotta do it quick."

"We don't have a plan." Denki swore and looked around at his classmates, "That's the….oh...ok, that could work. Yaoyorozu, make Iida a pair of roller blades."

"Um...Ok." Yaoyorozu's chest instantly started glowing and Denki turned to Iida.

It was a desperate plan and he honestly wasn't sure if it was all him or if the vestiges were helping him out because he wasn't that smart, but he had the feeling Izuku would be proud of him either way, "Iida, have you ever been on a launch roller coaster before."

"Well, yes, but I don't think…" Iida tried to argue, even as Momo

handed him the roller blades and he started putting them on.

“Well, uh, if this works, it’s probably gonna be pretty similar to that, so uh, hang onto your seatbelt!” Denki pushed him out the door, only avoiding the remaining bees because Sero was using his tape as flypaper. “I, uh, really hope this works. Your engines are metal, right?”

Iida looked at him, “I don’t think I like where this is going.”

“Too late. Uh, you’ll probably want to use your engines to speed up once you get going.” Denki gave him an awkwards smile as he bent down and put his hand on one of Iida’s engines, then muttered to himself. “I really hope this works.”

One for All fowled out of him and he focused on wrapping the energy around his arm in the opposite direction than what he did normally. He needed to reverse the charge, because if he could do that then instead of attracting the metal…Iida yelled as he went shooting down the street, forcibly repelled away from Denki as fast as he could go.

Sero whisted, “Whoa, Kaminari! Where did you learn to do that?!”

Denki shrugged, “Youtube?”

“How’s he supposed to stop?” Todoroki asked.

Denki’s eyes widened as black mist wrapped around them, “Oops.”

“Don’t you like my Nomu?” Shigaraki asked gleefully, adding insult to injury. “Sensei gave him to me to kill the symbol of peace, but that doesn’t mean he can’t kill you too! As soon as I give the order, you’re gone!”

Katsuki grit his teeth and focused on not blacking out again, which wasn’t easy with two broken legs. This guy wasn’t normal and Katsuki had the sinking feeling that he was some kind of berserker or something. He’d slowed down drastically right before reaching him, so Eraser had probably taken away whatever speed quirk he’d been using, but he was a monster even without it. There was no way he’d be able to walk like this, but that stupid Nomu had forgotten that Katsuki didn’t need them as long as he still had his hands.

The Nomu was still pinning Katsuki to the ground, but he managed to twist his body and shove one of his hands into its stupid face. His

gauntlets weren't full, but he couldn't afford to incapacitate himself with a full power blast, so it would have to do. He used his teeth to pull the pin and expected Shigaraki to start ranting in frustration again as part of the Nomu's face was blown away, but the crazy hand guy just laughed harder.

"That's not gonna be enough, *Kacchan!"* Shigaraki cackled. "Nomu was bioengineered to kill All Might! Your puny blasts don't have anywhere near enough attack power!"

Katsuki watched in horror as the smoke cleared and the Nomu's face knit itself back together in front of him. The monster had had a speed quirk, that had been obvious, but now he had healing too, so multiple quirks, and Shigaraki had said he was bioengineered, just like Ogawa and the berserkers had been. Katsuki's eyes widened as he realized they weren't being attacked by some random villains.

They were being attacked by the villain factory.

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

Next Update: 04.30.2021

Shock

Chapter Summary

The students have been scattered.

Chapter Notes

Art!
death
Boba_Girl X X
Avisa X
kiyumiarashi
Mae

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Denki tumbled to the ground and landed in a rough roll. Yaoyorozu and Jiro were already on their feet and dusting themselves off, but he couldn't see any of their other classmates anywhere. He activated his quirk and let a small amount of electricity coat his body as he got to his feet, “Where are we? Where is everyone else?”

Yaoyorozu pointed to the roof, “We’re still in the USJ, but I don’t know where the others ended up.”

“All over.” Jiro’s earphone jacks swiveled around as she listened. “They’re all still inside, as far as I can hear, but that’s not our problem right now. We’ve got company.”

The three of them shifted into battle stances as villains started coming out from behind the rocks. There were a couple dozen from what Denki could tell, and all of them looked ready to attack. He wasn’t ready for this.

“Jiro, what weapon do you want?” Yaoyorozu said softly. “I’m making a quarterstaff for myself.”

“Um...something sharp?” Jiro said. “Like a sword or something?”

Yaoyorozu nodded and her hand started glowing, “I’m making it from carbon fiber, so it’ll be a little different than a traditional sword, but if

I make it out of metal, Kaminari will just pull it out of your hands as soon as he starts using magnetism."

"Cool." Jiro said. "You might want to ditch your belt too."

"Yeah." Yaoyorozu said. "Good idea. Kaminari, pull the villains close and either take care of them yourself or pass them off to us. Sound good?"

Kaminari let One for All wrap around him, "Yep."

Jiro slashed her sword, "Let's do this."

Uraraka coughed up a last mouthful of water as Mineta slammed onto the deck next to her, "Thanks for the save, Tsu."

Tsu nodded, "Sure thing. You think everyone's spread out?"

"Yeah, probably." Uraraka nodded. "And if their areas are anything like ours, they're surrounded by villains as well."

"These guys can't seriously be here to kill All Might!" Mineta screamed. "All Might's super strong, so he'll save us, right?"

"If Iida can get to him in time." Tsu pointed out. "But we need to be focused on not getting tortured and killed."

"K-killed?!" Mineta's eyes widened and he started sobbing, "No! I can't die! Not without touching Yaoyorozu's boobs!"

Uraraka rolled her eyes, "Tsu, how far can you jump?"

"Not all the way to shore, especially not carrying anyone else." Tsu shook her head. "And landing in the water would put us in the middle of the villains."

"And if the two of us are weightless?" Uraraka suggested.

"I'd still be too heavy…" Tsu thought for a moment. "Unless you canceled my gravity after we had momentum. That'd make it harder to land though."

They screamed as the boat jerked and was cut in half by one of the villain's quirks as they got impatient. Uraraka took a deep breath, "Still less risky than staying here. Let's go."

Inasa grinned and wiped the rain from his eyes, “They don’t know our quirks!”

Tokoyami nodded seriously, “If they had, they would not have sent me to the shadows or you to the gale.”

Kouda’s eyes widened and he shook his head and pointed to some of the villains pouring out from the streets and alleyways around them. Inasa frowned. Kouda was the only one at a disadvantage here, since there was no way any animals would be out in a storm like this. Inasa used the wind to blow the villains away and buy them a little time, “We need to get out of here.”

“But the exit has been lost in the mists of darkness.” Tokoyami observed.

Inasa looked around at the fake city, his eyes locking onto a fake mailbox that had been bolted to the floor and he grinned as he formed a mini-tornado and ripped it from the cement, guiding it up towards the roof. The wind was so loud that they could hardly hear the crash as the ceiling shattered, but the brightness outside coming through the hole cut dramatically through the rain like a spotlight.

Inasa grinned, “Then we’ll just have to make our own!”

Toshinori rushed toward the USJ as fast as he could. It had taken all of his self control not to interfere in any incidents this morning, but as soon as Nedzu had called him and told him that they were expecting an attack, he’d known he had to be in top shape. The teachers had discussed it and had decided it was more important for him to be around to protect the main campus rather than going to the USJ with class 1A, which had seemed like a good idea until Aizawa and Thirteen had missed their last check in.

With the threat of an attack, Nedzu had insisted on activating an emergency protocol that dictated mandatory check-ins every half hour. It wasn’t anything big, just a text to prove that they were still alive and well, but neither Aizawa nor Thirteen had sent their last text, which meant that either young Kaminari had caused a power outage or something had happened. Toshinori was desperately hoping it was the former. He could handle being chewed out again, but if the students were being attacked and he wasn’t even there to help them…

He heard a scream coming toward him and his eyes widened as he realized that Iida was racing toward him far too fast, engines revving

at full power as he raced ahead. He only had a split second to brace himself before young Iida was barreling into him and Toshinori let himself move with the boy to soften the sudden stop and let him calm down.

“I…I’m never allowing Kaminari to strategize again.” Iida’s eyes were wide as he panted. “All Might! Thank goodness!”

“Young Iida!” Toshinori clapped his shoulder. “What’s going on? Is everything alright?”

Iida swallowed and shook his head, “There’s villains! They have some a teleporter and a lot of street villains as well! Thirteen was injured and my classmates insisted I go on ahead to bring help when the door was blocked by a swarm of bees!”

“The other teachers and some extra heroes should already be on their way.” All Might said. “Continue on and brief them on the situation, I’ll go help Aizawa and Thirteen. Good work, my boy!”

Iida nodded in determination and left a trail of dust behind him as he raced away. All Might jumped in the opposite direction. So much for hoping that it was just Young Kaminari losing control of One for All again.

Katsuki stared in horror at the Nomu, Izuku’s quirk explanations echoing in his mind as he realized what he was looking at. Izuku had warned him that forcing too many quirks into a person could cause brain damage, but he hadn’t really known what that meant until he saw Nomu’s dead eyes staring at nothing as he pinned him to the ground. The Nomu was braindead, only capable of following Shigaraki’s orders. If things had gone wrong, this was what Ogawa would have become.

Katsuki didn’t want to believe it. What was the villain factory doing here? Were they just here to kill All Might? Had the grunts known? They couldn’t have, otherwise Maki and Akiko would never have joined up, but still...were they wanting to test their experiments? Were they trying to find new subjects? How much trouble were they really in?

Now that he was pinned, Shigaraki wasn’t too concerned about him and had turned most of his attention to Aizawa, content to let Katsuki stew over the fact that he could be killed at any second, like he’d ever let that happen. If he couldn’t hurt the damn thing, then he’d have to

find another way out.

He couldn't really see Aizawa fighting from his current angle, the Nomu was mostly in the way, but every so often a villain would be tossed his way and Katsuki gasped as he recognized one of them. What was Ogawa's sister doing throwing in with the same villains that kidnapped her brother?!

His pain faded into the background as he let rage and adrenaline take control, "Arakune Ogawa, what the *hell* do you think you're doing?!"

Katsuki practically shook as Akakune brushed some dust out of her hair and turned toward him, "You're that kid that came looking for my kid brother, aren't you? Kacchan or whatever. Seems like you're not as strong as you think you are, just look at you!"

"Are you crazy?" Katsuki growled. "Don't you realize these are the same monsters that took your brother?!"

Arakune froze for a moment, then shook herself, "And why should I care about that?"

"Maybe because you're family?!" Katsusi scoffed. "Aren't you supposed to care about him?"

"I care about number one, anything else gets you taken advantage of." Arakune rolled her eyes and started walking away. "And look, I'm standing and you're pinned. Seems like you're the crazy one, here."

"Fine, maybe I am crazy." Katsuki spat. "But, do you even know what these people do? Look at this guy! They experiment on people, Arakune! They experimented on your brother!"

That made her stop, "What are you getting at?"

"I'm saying that you and your brother have similar quirks." Katsuki glared at her. "So what's to keep them from going after you next? Help me and prove that they shouldn't mess with you!"

"Um, ladies…?" Denki flinched as a bunch of random metal objects flew toward him and he just barely managed to deactivate his quirk in time. "I think they're catching onto us!"

The whole magnet fishing strategy had worked well for about half the villains, but Denki supposed it was only a matter of time until the rest

of the villains figured out that wearing metal around him was a liability and started ditching it. So now, rather than pulling in villains when he activated his quirk, Denki was met with a flood of knives, hammers, and even steel-toed boots. It wasn't working nearly as well.

Yaoyorozu swung her quarterstaff into another villain, "You can repel things too, right?"

"Uh…" Denki panicked, "Not accurately!"

"We don't need you to be accurate!" Jiro yelled. "We need you to be dangerous!"

Yaoyorozu tossed him a medium sized bag that was way heavier than it should have been. It rattled as Denki opened it and poured some of the contents into his hand, "Are...are these marbles?"

"Steel shot." Yaoyorozu said, "Jiro, let's find cover!"

Denki gulped, but took a deep breath and poured the marbles out all around him as the girls hid behind a rock, "There's no shame in fighting dirty if it keeps you alive. Ok. Let's make it rain."

He let One for All flow around him and all of the sudden, the marbles shot away from him like bullets. The villains tried to dodge, but between the marbles and all the metal they'd ditched earlier, the air was full of projectiles. Once the main wave had passed the villains Denki took a deep breath and reversed the flow of his electricity, calling the metal right back to him, taking out even more of the villains.

The only problem now was preventing them from hitting him. Denki flinched and instinctively put a hand up to shield his head, not even realizing that he'd reversed his charge until the metal didn't hit him. He hesitantly looked up and took a sharp breath as he realized that all of the villains were either on the ground or running away. He'd taken out an entire group of villains without going over his limits! He'd fought at range without making himself completely useless!

"Is it safe to come out yet?" Jiro yelled.

"Yeah." Denki called back. "Thanks for the idea, Yaoyorozu! You're pretty and smart!"

"No time for flirting, you idiot." Jiro rolled her eyes as they came out from behind the rock, then she started panicking, "Kaminari! Behind

you!”

Denki had a flash of his body screaming *danger* again, but only briefly felt someone grab him by the back of the neck before instinct and muscle memory kicked in and he threw his opponent over his shoulder and slammed them into the ground. He would definitely have to thank Izuku for making sure he was prepared for all kinds of unconventional capture holds, but he didn’t have time to celebrate before the villain was burrowing into the ground.

“Where’d he go?” Yaoyorozu tensed. “Jiro, can you hear him?”

“Kinda…” Jiro’s face hardened in determination as she jammed her earphone jacks into the ground, “but I can definitely force him out into the open!”

The ground started shaking and Denki had to widen his stance to settle himself until the villain popped out of the ground again. He looked a little dizzy, but he still managed to wrap a sparking hand around Yaoyorozu’s throat and glare at them all.

“Don’t even think about making a move.” The villain snarled and wrapped his hand tighter around Yaoyorozu’s neck. “Or the girl gets it!”

Jiro shot him a panicked glance before putting her hands up in surrender and Denki followed her lead. How was he supposed to fight him? He couldn’t shock him from this far away and even if he could, that would hurt Yaoyorozu too. The guy *was* wearing metal, but if he tried to pull him closer, that would pull her in as well and give him a chance to hurt her. If only he could find a way to separate them.

Denki schooled his expression as an idea occurred to him. He had two arms. Theoretically, he should be able to attract one and repel the other. He saw the glow of Yaoyorozu’s quirk under the villain’s hand and recognized that insulating armor she’d used against him during the heroes vs. villains exercise, so he didn’t have to worry about the guy shocking her too badly, but he still needed to move quickly and not let the villain know what he was planning. Time to weaponize his flirting.

“Yaoyorozu,” Denki said playfully, “I know this isn’t the best time, but as long as we’re all gonna die anyway, are you *sure* you don’t want to be attracted to me?”

Denki grinned and winked, cheering internally as Yaoyorozu’s eyes

widened in understanding and her wrist started glowing. In just another minute, they'd be ready.

The villain laughed, "Are you seriously flirting at the time like this? I mean, shoot your shot, kid, but really?!"

"You're just jealous." Denki smirked as Yaoyorozu finished creating her bracelet. "It's not my fault you're repulsive!"

It felt like his brain was splitting in half as he focused on attracting Yaoyorozu with his left hand at the same time he repelled the villain with his right. He was terrified that it wouldn't work, that either he'd get it wrong or that the two would cancel themselves out, but he just kept shifting his hands until the villain lost his grip on Yaoyorozu, then he *pushed.* The villain slammed into the cliffside at full speed and Denki deactivated his quirk just in time to not electrocute Yaoyorozu as he caught her.

"Wow…" Jiro blinked. "I can't believe that actually worked."

"Yeah." Denki gave a breathy chuckle. "Me neither."

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 05.03.2021

Overwhelmed

Chapter Summary

USJ conclusion

Chapter Notes

Art!
HurricaneFox
Claire;P
Mae

Memes!
X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Your spider silk is strong enough to hold this guy, I know it is.” Katsuki tried hard not to sound like he was pleading, “I just need someone to hold him. I can get away after that. ”

“Really? With two broken legs?” Arakune crossed her arms skeptically. “You know, I’m half tempted to help you just to watch you fail.”

“Not to avenge your brother or anything?” Katsuki grumbled under his breath. “Fine. If I get out, great, and if I don’t, you get some entertainment, all while proving to these villains that you’re in control and they shouldn’t mess with you. It’s a win-win for you, alright?”

Arakune smirked, “Deal.”

Her hair shot out and Katsuki launched himself away as soon as he felt the Nomu’s weight decrease. He *really* shouldn’t be jostling broken bones like this, but staying where he was would be worse. Flying wasn’t as easy as he had anticipated, his balance had been thrown off by both the pain and his useless legs, so he hit the ground far sooner and harder than he anticipated, landing right on his shoulder, which made a suspicious popping sound and caused him to black out again for half a second.

Katsuki grit his teeth and waited for the Nomu to attack him again, but nothing happened. He forced himself up on one elbow so he could look around, and the monster was just sitting there, dead-eyed as ever.

He didn't even make any move to attack Arakune as she retracted her hair and rushed back to fight Aizawa again, sending a satisfied smirk in Katsuki's direction. He wanted to flip her off, but somehow he suspected it wouldn't have the full impact if he could barely even move. The Nomu must have decided that Katsuki was sufficiently incapacitated, and since Shigaraki hadn't given him any other orders, he was just waiting.

It was relieving and creepy at the same time.

When Toshinori arrived at the USJ, the students saw him before he saw them. There was a swarm of bees at the front door, just as young Iida had described, so instead of at the entrance, the escaped students had congregated on the side, half-hidden in the trees. Over half the students must still be inside, but the rest were gathered and treating each other's injuries as best they could. Todoroki had created a miniature glacier against the side of the building and Kouda stood back, looking upward with a bird on each shoulder toward where Tokoyami and Dark Shadow were perched on the roof next to a section of shattered glass, a handful of other birds circling them. As Toshinori watched, a gust of wind blew through the hole, carrying Yaoyorozu with it. Dark Shadow caught her before she flew too far and dropped her onto the glacier, which upon further observation was, more accurately, a slide that allowed young Yaoyorozu to reach the ground safely, where she immediately began creating first-aid supplies. He couldn't help taking a moment to be proud of his students, despite the urgency of the situation.

"All Might!" Mina called out to him and waved him over, tears in her eyes, "You came!"

"Yes, young Ashido." All Might smiled. "I am here."

"The best way in and out is through the roof." Todoroki reported. "According to Kouda, the bees at the entrance aren't normal, so we decided it was best to give them a wide berth, especially considering that bees had sometimes to do with my father's disappearance. Kouda has birds taking care of any stray bees that try to block our escape here."

"Good work. Keep handling evacuation until the other heroes arrive." All Might said, popping his knuckles. "I'll take care of the rest."

"We need to get out of here." Mineta cried. "Sure, we got off that

stupid boat, but there's still villains everywehre!"

"Where do you want us to go?" Ochako huffed. "It's not like we can go out the entrance, not with all those bees blocking the door. What do you want us to do?"

"Just get us out of here!" Mineta screamed.

Tsu smacked him with her tongue, "Quiet. Let's go toward the plaza. Maybe some of the other students will be around too."

Ochako nodded, "And we can see if Bakugo and Aizawa need any help!"

"Are you crazy?" Mineta whisper-yelled, which was a minor improvement. "We can't fight the leaders! You're gonna get us killed"

"We're not gonna fight the leaders." Ochako insisted. "But maybe we can help lighten Aizawa's load a little."

They kept low to the ground as they crept around the plaza and Ochako had to hold in a whistle as she watched Aizawa fight. He was holding off six villains like it was absolutely nothing and it was the coolest thing she had ever seen. Someday, she'd be a hero just like that.

Mineta let out a squeak beside her and Ochako turned to see him covering his mouth in horror as he pointed to something on the ground, "I-is that Bakugo?!"

She followed his gaze and gasped. Aizawa may have been doing well, but Bakugo sure wasn't. He was moving, but from the grimace on his face, he was in a lot of pain. Before she had time to think, Ochako was running to him, ignoring the whispered shouts from Tsu and Mineta to be careful.

"Bakugo?" she knelt down beside him, wincing sympathetically as she took in his injuries. "How can I help?"

"I…" Bakugo grit his teeth. "I think my shoulder's dislocated, so you could pop that into place. I'm fine."

Ochako rolled her eyes, "You're obviously not. You…"

She froze as the main villain started speaking, his rasping voice sending chills down her spine, "I thought you were cool before,

Eraserhead, but this is something else! I'm curious to see how much you can *really* do. You started fighting even harder when I hurt your precious little student, so let's give that another try, huh? Nomu! Kill Kacchan!"

Ochako didn't know what to do, but she didn't have time to do anything besides share a terrified glance with Bakugo before there was a rush of wind and dust started flying everywhere. It took a moment to clear, and when it did, Ochako started crying.

All Might stood a few feet in front of them, blocking the path of the most terrifying villain she had ever seen and for the first time ever, he wasn't smiling, "I am here...to make you pay!"

"All Might!" Bakugo yelled. "Be careful! These bastards are with the villain factory! That guy you're fighting has multiple quirks!"

All Might froze for a half a second before tightening his grip on the villain, "Thanks for the heads up, young Bakugo. We'll catch them and avenge your friend."

Ochako wasn't sure exactly what all that meant, but the main villain did. He grinned creepily behind the hand on his face, "Nomu, change of plans. Kill the symbol of peace."

All Might lunged forward to attack the monster, and Ochako figured this was their best chance.

"Come on," she leaned down and whispered to Bakugo, "we gotta get you outta here."

"I can still fight." Bakugo growled. "These bastards need to go down. Just pop my shoulder back in place and I can use my explosions for mobility."

Ochako just looked at him in disbelief for a moment, then slapped him. He looked at her in shock and confusion as he started to float. Ochako just grabbed his uninjured arm and started pulling him back toward Tsu and Mineta.

"You're being an idiot." she huffed. "I don't argue with idiots. Now how did All Might get in? We might be able to get out the same way."

Shouta breathed a sigh of relief. As much as he disliked All Might on principle, at least the oaf had done *something* right. He knocked the

last of the grunts into the fountain and was finally able to charge Shigaraki, “I’m gonna make you regret threatening my student like that!”

“Careful, Eraserhead.” Shigaraki was fast and dodged his blow. “If you care too much, you might just fall apart.”

Shouta only had a split second to wonder what he was talking about before Shigaraki weaved under his capture weapon and grabbed his arm. The timing was terrible and he held out as long as he could, but he had to blink sometime. It was the pain that caused him to open his eyes to shoot back open almost immediately and he jumped back out of Shigaraki’s reach.

“I figured out your tell!” Shigaraki said gleefully. Shouta stared at his crumbling arm in shock. “You’re going to have to do better than that if you want to protect your students!”

Denki counted his classmates for the third time, but still came up with the same number, “Nineteen. And no one’s seen Hagakure? Or, well, not seen, but..”

“I can’t hear her out here.” Shoji said. “She must still be inside, but there’s so much background noise…”

Denki frowned for a moment, then strengthened up and clenched his fists, “I’m gonna go find her.”

“Are you crazy?!” Mineta screamed. “The heroes are coming! Just let them save her!”

“Thirteen is already injured.” Denki pointed out. “And even if they can’t see her, she’s outnumbered. I can’t just leave her like that!”

Bakugo tried to sit up, “Then I’m coming with…”

Uraraka shoved him lightly back down, “No you’re not. The adrenaline is gonna start wearing off any minute and what’ll you do then? Faint in their general direction?”

“Shut up, cheeks!” Bakugo growled.

“Guys, we’re wasting time. I’m doing this and you can’t stop me.” Denki said, putting his hand on a metal section of the wall and activating his magnetism. “Send the heroes our way when they

arrive."

His classmates yelled at him to stop, but Denki ignored them and ran inside. He'd last seen Hagakure at the entrance, so he should head that way first, but he should activate his quirk just in case he ran into any more of those robot bees. He knew he'd have to be careful passing the plaza though, he didn't want to end up like Bakugo...except for then he actually passed the plaza and saw All Might being pulled through a portal by that weird Nomu monster that Bakugo had described about and all rational thought apparently flew out the window.

All Might was *All Might* ! He always saved the day and he always won! But...Denki guessed it kinda made sense that things weren't always what they were supposed to be. All Might, who should be strong, was skinny and weak-looking in his head, and Izuku, who should be weak because he was quirkless, was one of the strongest people he'd ever met. So while he was surprised to see All Might in a pinch, Denki took it in stride and didn't let it throw him off too badly. Even heroes needed saving sometimes.

Aizawa was too busy fighting the hand guy to help, so Denki knew he needed to do *something* , but what *could* he do? The Nomu was trying to pull All Might through a portal, so maybe things would work out if Denki could distract the portal guy? It was worth a short, at least, and he'd seen something glint like metal underneath all that mist earlier, right?

Denki took a deep breath and magnetized his arm, reaching out toward Kurogiri, "I *really* hope that's actually metal."

There wasn't any more time to worry about it though, before Kurogiri was flying through the air towards him. He didn't even have time to deactivate his quirk before the guy was barreling into him, which meant the villain got the full shock of Kaminari's quirk as soon as they connected, which was enough to make him spasm and lose control of his own quirk. There was a weird squelching sound and Denki almost threw up as he realized that the portal had closed with the Nomu still halfway through it. Had...had he just accidentally killed someone?! What if that had been All Might?!

"Enough." Kurogiri's voice echoed with anger and Denki had barely enough time to register the fact that the Nomu was *regrowing half its body* before he was swallowed up by that weird purple mist again. "Nuisances should be eliminated."

Denki prepped himself for a harsh landing, expecting to be warped back to the mountain zone like last time, but when the mist cleared again he was submerged in cold water. The villain had teleported him into the flood zone. Denki tried to gasp on instinct, only to get a lungful of water instead of air and he panicked. HIs last coherent thought before shorting out was that he *really* needed to stop activating his quirk whenever things went wrong.

Shouta would have stopped and stared in shock as the Nomu regenerated *half it's body,* but he couldn't afford to take his eyes off Shigaraki even for a moment, not even when one of his idiot students was warped to god knew where. He hadn't even had a breath to evaluate the damage to his elbow, but he knew it was bad. One wrong move, one blink at the wrong time and he was dust and to top it all off, he was starting to get tired. At least All Might was here now, which meant that the other teachers and heroes were on their way as well. He just had to hold out a little longer.

Shigaraki, oddly enough, seemed absolutely *delighted* that All Might had arrived, "See how powerful Nomu's regeneration is? He was designed to beat you at your strongest, All Might! There's no way you can beat this boss!"

While he was ranting, Shouta took a moment to blink and tried to follow up with an attack, but even though he managed to kick Shigaraki in the chest and knock him off balance, he recovered before Shouta could restrain him. What was it with these stupid brats that focused on being too quick too catch! First Viridian, now this guy? It was really starting to get annoying.

Out of his sight, All Might growled, "If this monster was created to beat me at my best, then I'll just have to go beyond that! Plus Ultra!!!"

Suddenly, it was like the plaza had been hit with a tornado and Shouta was almost blown off his feet as All Might and the Nomu exchanged blows. He saw Shigaraki reaching toward him though the clouds of dust and he braced himself for a counterattack, but before he could do anything, a strong gust of wind and dirt blew straight into his face and as much as he wanted to, he couldn't stop his body's instinctual reaction.

Shouta blinked.

Nedzu led the charge to the plaza as the rest of heroes they'd called in

started spreading out to restrain the villains and look for Hagakure and Kaminari, who according to the other students should be the only two children remaining inside. He could barely see Yagi as he fought with a giant villain faster than the eye could see, but Aizawa was looking worse for wear. One of his arms hung limply at his side and the first thing Nedzu saw when he arrived at the plaza was him jumping back from a villain and activating his quirk as blood started flowing down over the entire right side of his face.

Nedzu signalled to Snipe, who nodded and shot Aizawa's opponent through the shoulder right as Yagi launched his own enemy right through the roof with a crash. Aizawa immediately ran forward with his capture weapon at the ready and Yagi turned to him, but instead of allowing himself to be captured, the villain was rapidly being swallowed by the purple mist young Iida had described, "Game over...for now."

"No!" Yagi lunged forward, but his hand and Aizawa's capture weapon both closed on empty air as the mist disappeared. "Get back here you cowards!"

"They're gone, All Might. They can't hear you." Aizawa hissed and grabbed his injured arm as he turned to Nedzu. "The students?"

"All are safe and safe and accounted for with two exceptions." Nedzu answered.

"One exception." Midnight cut in. "Hagakure was treating Thirteen's injuries near the entrance. The villain must not have seen her when he was scattering the other students."

"Very well." Nedzu nodded. "Then the only student still missing is young Kaminari."

"But the villain warped him away, so..." Yagi coughed, a drop of blood leaking from the corner of his mouth. "So where could he be?"

As soon as Cementoss opened an entrance large enough for everyone, Manual ran straight to the flood zone, expecting a fight, but instead, he was met with silence. The entire pool was full of villains who were either unconscious or too dazed to fight, which made his hair stand on end. It was creepy.

He shook his head and took a deep breath. It wasn't his job to get creeped out, it was his job to be a hero and that currently meant

saving a bunch of villains from drowning. Sure, from the looks of it, most of them could probably breath underwater, but they still needed to be taken in and receive medical attention from whatever had knocked them out in the first place. He manipulated the water to wash everyone ashore and almost dropped his quirk when he realized that one of the bodies was far too young to be one of the villains.

Throwing caution to the wind, he threw the rest of the villains to shore with one giant wave and ran to the kid, desperately using his quirk to pull water out of his lungs. How long had he been underwater?

“No, no, don’t do this.” Manual muttered. “Don’t die on me kid! I found a student! Just hang in there, kid. Hang in there.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 05.07.2021

Hospital

Chapter Summary

Recovery

Chapter Notes

Art!
JJ-Jinkies
Magical_Girl23
Alix.nerball
Cosplay.lock
PandaaKaatsuki
geraldmariaivo
kiyumiarashi

Cosplay!
kiyumiarashi

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Five sighed heavily, “Kid, I thought you said you didn’t come here often.”

“I…” Denki leaned over as he started coughing again. “This is a mental space, why am I…”

“Your brain still knows you drowned.” Seven came up and started patting his back. “And seriously Five? The kid almost died! Can’t you cut him a little slack?!”

Five rolled his eyes. “Come on, it’s just a little water!”

“It was in his lungs! It was not just a *little* water!” Seven said indignantly.

“Um...I’m alive, right? Like, we’d definitely know if I was dead?” Denki asked hesitantly. “Because you guys are kinda like ghosts already, so if I died, would I just stay here, or would this disappear since this is my brain?”

The vestiges looked at each other for a long moment before two shrugged, “No idea. We always get passed on before the holder's death, so we don’t really know what happens, but we’re fairly certain that you are currently alive.”

Denki took a deep breath, “Ok, cool...well, *that* was kinda intense.”

Five snorted, “What? You weren’t expecting to be attacked by villains during class?”

“You did well despite that.” Eight, *All Might,* smiled proudly. “You’re mastering One for All very quickly.”

“Yeah, you are.” Four gave him a pat on the back. “We were impressed when you figured out repulsion. You really sent that kid flying.”

Denki winced, “I really hope he’s alright...I’m gonna need to practice a lot more. I should hang out with Izuku later. I mean, I told him about the magnetism, but with school and everything, we haven’t had time to experiment. I’m sure he’ll have all sorts of ideas that’ll help me control it better though!”

When no one said anything, he looked up to see the vestiges having a silent conversion through heavy looks, “Um...guys? It’s kinda my head, it’s not really polite to keep me out of the loop!”

They exchanged another heavy look before One frowned slightly, “How much are you planning on telling him about the attack?”

“Um…” Denki thought for a moment. “Well, I was planning on telling him about the repulsion...but I’m sure there’s probably some things that the police will want me to keep to myself, not that...well, I mean, he’s not even supposed to know about One for All, and you know how well *that’s* working out!”

“He was one of the reasons you were so hesitant to accept it, wasn’t he?” Six asked. “He’s the one who told you about the risks of accepting.”

Denki chuckled awkwardly, “Yeah, he’s like *super* smart, especially about quirks and stuff, so I tried bringing it up as, like, a funny hypothetical, but he panicked and thought I was being targeted by villains! It was kinda hilarious, once it all got cleared up.”

“Yeah, well, the kid’s got guts.” Five grinned. “It takes some balls to

take on…"

"Five!" Two growled harshly. "Not our place, let the kid figure it out himself."

Five held his hands up in surrender, "Hey, I'm just saying it's pretty cool, alright?"

"Um...guys?" Denki waved. "Again, no inside jokes in *my* head?"

"Sorry." Seven smiled kindly. "But Izuku's a good kid. I think you should trust him."

"I do." Denki said. "Why wouldn't I?"

"Because he's terrifying." Eight shivered. "But he cares for you."

"And he knows what he's doing." One added. "You've learned things from him about One for All that we would never have considered, even those of us who've been here since the beginning."

"So basically," Four shrugged, "just be sure to tell him everything."

Denki tilted his head, "Why do you guys like him so much? I mean, I'm glad you do! It's not a bad thing! I guess I'm just kinda curious?"

"Let's just say that he's more than meets the eye." Six said cryptically. "So when he comes to see you, don't leave anything out."

Izuku was one of his first visitors when he woke up and Denki immediately put on a fake pout, "We could have had the whole cinematic *dramatically blinks his eyes open and sees the best friend asleep on the uncomfortable plastic hospital chair,* but no! You had to be boring and wait for the doctors!"

Izuku rolled his eyes, "And your parents, or did you forget about them?"

"Meh, having your mom crochet at the foot of the bed isn't as dramatic." Denki shrugged. "How are you?"

Izuku frowned, "That's what I should be asking. I heard about the attack on the news, but when your mom said you were in the hospital…"

"It wasn't that bad!" Denki said. "I just overused my quirk again, it's

not a big deal."

Izuku pinned him with a look, "If it was just quirk overuse, you'd be in Recovery Girl's office, not the hospital. Try again."

Denki rubbed the back of his neck awkwardly, "Ok, so I *might* have been ten feet underwater when I overdid…"

Izuku panicked, "What?!"

"It's not a big deal!" Denki said. "I mean, ok, it's kinda a big deal, but the heroes saved me! And before you say anything, I wasn't *trying* to go swimming or anything! But the villains had this guy with a warp quirk and he was gonna kill All Might, so I couldn't just do nothing, but then he wanted me out of the way, so…"

"So he warped you someplace that you wouldn't be a problem." Izuku finished. "How do you even get yourself into these situations? There's not that many warp quirks, and I don't even know of a villain capable of warping, but obviously I just haven't heard of them…"

"Oh yeah!" Denki said. "And the shadow people in my head, you know, the ones that came with my quirk? They really like you!"

Izuku blushed, "T-they do?!"

Denki nodded, "Mhm! They said you cared about me and that I could trust you, so I should just keep being honest with you. To tell the truth, I'm just relieved they're not mad at me for spilling the beans about One for All or anything, but having them approve of you is a nice bonus!"

"Well, I guess if they were with All Might all the way until the quirk transfer, then they…" Izuku's blush was starting to fade as he trailed off, which Denki thought was a shame, but after a few seconds he turned to look Denki in the eyes. "Start at the beginning, before the villains showed up. Tell me everything."

"It's really nice of you to visit, Inko." the old hag said. "Is Izu-kun coming later or not this time?"

"He's actually already here," Auntie Inko gave a sad smile, "but he's visiting one of Katsuki's classmates who he met a few months ago. He might drop by later, if there's time, but I think he has something this afternoon, so I don't know if he'll be able to make it."

It was sweet of her to lie like that so Izuku didn't have to see him without acknowledging all the reasons he wouldn't want to. Katsuki wished he hadn't ruined their friendship, but he'd have to talk to the nerd eventually. Even if he didn't visit, Izuku would need to know about the nomu and *everything,* and he needed to know that he couldn't take on this case alone. Even All Might and the rest of the heroes hadn't been able to take down the leaders and they had tons of power if their ability to recruit grunts was any indication.

There was a knock on the door before it was hesitant pushed open and Izuku peeked his head in, "Mom, Auntie, Kacchan? I've got the right room, right?"

"Of course!" His old hag immediately pulled Izuku bodily into a hug. "How ya been brat? I haven't seen you in a while! Ya filled out!"

Izuku chuckled awkwardly and shrugged as he pulled away, "Yeah, I, uh, took up running and stuff. Uh...how are you."

"I'd be better if this idiot would stop giving me heart attacks." she cuffed Katsuki over the head. "Seriously, I might as well move in from how often he ends up in the hospital!"

"Hey!" Katsuki fixed his hair and glared at her. "You're acting like I *tried* to get villains to hurt me or something!"

Something about that made Izuku freeze for a split second and Katsuki felt his stomach sink as some gears turned in his brain. They didn't have time to click into place, though, before Izuku started talking again.

"It *has* been a while since I've had a chance to catch up with Kacchan though." He said. "I mean, now that we go to different schools, we don't run into each other anymore..."

"Oh, that's an understatement." his old hag grinned and grabbed Auntie Inko by the hand. "Come on Inko, let's go get some dinner and let the boys catch up."

"Uh…" Auntie looked to Izuku and Katsuki felt like shit when he realized she was *scared.*

Izuku, however, smiled encouragingly, "Will you pick me up a soda? I'll come meet you if Kacchan gets tired or something!"

Katsuki nodded, "Yeah. I mean, you can bring me something

caffeinated, just in case he bores me to sleep or something."

Auntie hesitated for another long moment before nodding and following Katsuki's old hag out, "Just text me if you need anything, baby, alright?"

Izuku nodded, "I will."

Izuku watched her leave and waited until the door was completely closed before turning back to Kacchan. He looked good for someone who had just broken both his legs, but considering that he went to UA, Izuku supposed that they had Recovery Girl to thank for that.

After a long moment, Kacchan spoke up, his voice deadly serious, "It was the villain factory."

Izuku swallowed, "I know."

Kacchan nodded, "Dunce Face already told you?"

"Uh…I don't, um, who…?" Izuku backpedaled. He hadn't told Kacchan about Denki, had he?

Kacchan scoffed, "Even a blind guy could see you taught Kaminari how to fight, you damn nerd. You've got a unique way of fighting, so if you take away the electricity shit and give him a slingshot, anyone would think he was you. Plus, Auntie said you were visiting a friend, so yeah."

Izuku winced. He hadn't really considered that Denki would pick up on his fighting style. He hadn't even realized he *had* a fighting style. He was just taking down villains and staying alive. If it was really that obvious, would the villains pick up on it? He'd thought he was helping him, but was he actually making him a target? How had he messed up so badly without even realizing it?

"Dunce Face can take care of himself." Kacchan knocked him out of his spiral. "Don't worry about him. What'd he tell you about the attack?"

"In general or just about the villain factory?" Izuku shook his head when Kacchan gave him a look. "Sorry, villain factory, obviously. Uh, just the monster with multiple quirks and the swarm of bees."

"Bees?" Kacchan frowned. "Didn't fight those, but then again, I was kinda busy fighting those bastard's failed experiment. The thing was

braindead, Izuku, it was so fucking creepy. I just kept thinking that was how Ogawa could have ended up if things just…"

"I should have been there." Izuku blurted out. "I mean, this is my case! I've been fighting berserkers and villain factory experiments for months, I would have been able to...I should have been there."

"Yeah, you should have." Kacchan agreed bluntly.

Izuku felt his stomach sink. It was his fault that Kacchan was here in the hospital. If he had just been better at being a vigilante and had caught the villains like he was supposed to, so many people wouldn't have gotten hurt. Kacchan wouldn't have gotten his legs broken. Denki wouldn't have almost drowned. "I...I'm sorry."

"You could have helped us." Kacchan scowled and gripped at the sheets. "If you were just in the hero course, you would have been there to fight with us. I'm not saying nobody would have gotten hurt, because obviously, but you could have fought with us, Izuku. Why can't you just stop being stubborn and realize that being a hero is better than being a vigilante for the rest of your goddamn life?!"

Izuku felt tears welling up in the corners of his eyes and pushed them back, "You *know* why I can't do that, Kacchan."

"No." Kacchan said firmly. "No, I really fucking don't. You're just as capable as anyone with a quirk and I'm not gonna force you, I lost the right to do that because of how much I've hurt you, but please, just get your head out of your ass already and let Eraserhead catch you."

"I can't do that, Kacchan." Izuku sniffed. "If Eraser caught me, do you *really* think they'd let me into the hero course? Even on the off chance that Eraser was ok with my... *everything* and was willing to push for my acceptance, to put someone like me in the hero course, they'd have to get approval from the principal, the school board, probably even the hero commission! Even if I deserved to be a hero, which I don't, there's no way that that many people are going to just be fine with a useless little quirkless kid joining the hero course!"

"You're not useless." Kacchan growled softly. "I get that you don't wanna get caught, I respect that and I'm not gonna sabotage you or anything like I would have back in middle school, but you've already proven yourself and…"

They heard voices out in the hallway and Kacchan froze. Izuku tilted his head, "Are our mom's back already? I thought they'd be gone a

little longer."

Kacchan's head snapped toward him, "Get in the bathroom."

"Get in the…" Izuku looked at him in confusion. "What are you…?"

"Look, do you *want* to get caught?" Kacchan hissed. "Aizawa's outside!"

"Aizawa?" Izuku relaxed slightly. "That's your homeroom teacher, right? Why…?"

Kacchan was looking at him like he was an idiot. "Didn't Dunce Face tell you anything? Our homeroom teacher is *Eraserhead!"*

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 05.10.2021

Overheard

Chapter Summary

What does Eraser *truely think?*

Chapter Notes

Art!
Color-NS
TheTimyJeep
Crickets
Claire;P

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku's eyes widened as he saw the door handle move and he dashed into the bathroom as quickly as he could, barely managing to lock himself inside before he heard someone come in. He slid down against the door to the bathroom and tried to quiet his breathing as Eraser started talking, completely unaware that he was one wrong move away from catching Viridian. This was *not* going to be fun, was it?

Eraserhead sounded absolutely done, "What could have possibly convinced you to do something so stupid?"

Kacchan scoffed, "Nice to see you too, hobo. No, *I'm glad you're alive* or anything? What a great homeroom teacher I've got! Real top notch example!"

"Oh yes, of course." Eraser said dryly. "Congratulations on surviving the most idiotic plan you could have come up with. I'm *so* proud."

"Hey, it worked, didn't it?" Kacchan said defensively. "I got some of the villains to leave."

"Yeah." Izuku could just imagine Eraser rolling his eyes. "Right before you antagonized the villains and got your body snapped like a glowstick. Wonderful job. A+."

Izuku had to slam a hand over his mouth to keep himself from snorting. It was hilarious listening to Eraser scold *someone else* for

once. Weird, definitely trippy, but hilarious.

When Kacchan started talking again, however, his tone was serious, “I wasn’t expecting them to have something like the Nomu. I thought they were just gonna be normal villains, not…”

He trailed off and Eraser obviously didn’t know what to say, because a long silence stretched on the other side of the door. Poor Kacchan…

“Ogawa would have been there.” Kacchan muttered. “If he hadn’t escaped when he did, those bastards would have found a way to make him attack us too.”

“You don’t know that.” Eraser tried. “Your friend’s strong. Maybe…”

Kacchan cut him off, “Kumo was there.”

Eraser inhaled sharply and Izuku frowned. *Kumo?* Who was that? Denki hadn’t told him about any villains with that name when he was telling him about the attack, but it was possible they were one of the thugs and Denki just didn’t hear the name. Had Kacchan ever mentioned them?

Eraser obviously knew who they were talking about and he sounded worried for some reason, “Are you sure?”

“No.” Kacchan gave a frustrated chuckle, “But that mist guy sure looked a hell of a lot like what Ogawa described when he talked about the loser’s new quirk. Some sort of dark vapor or something. Ogawa never figured out what it did.”

Oh. Kumo must be one of the villain factory victims, probably one that was held alongside Kacchan’s friend, which meant they probably went through the same experiments. Experiments that Izuku hadn’t been fast enough to stop. Izuku screwed his eyes shut and held back a whimper. He hadn’t stopped the villains, he hadn’t freed their victims, he hadn’t even helped the students at the USJ attack. Just how many people had he been too slow to save?

He really was useless, wasn’t he?

“Ok.” Eraser took a deep breath. “Have you talked to Ogawa since everything happened? Can he confirm your suspicions?”

“No.” Kacchan sounded even more annoyed than usual, which made Izuku smile sadly. He must really care about his friend. “Recovery Girl

said I'm not allowed to leave the room and the stupid doctors are backing her up. I'm gonna talk to him soon though."

"Good, but I'll text Tsukauchi and have him ask as well." Eraser said. "I was actually just talking to him and we were headed over there, but I decided that you probably needed some sense knocked into you first."

"Great." Kacchan deadpanned. "Consider it knocked."

Eraser let out an amused huff, "Problem child. And speaking of problem children, I wonder where Viridian is?"

Izuku froze.

"Uh…" Kacchan said dumbly. "What? Why?"

"Because *that* Problem Child has a habit of involving himself with everything involving this case." Eraser pointed out. "And if he thinks he didn't do enough and it led to people getting hurt, he'll probably try to put himself in danger to make up for it, which is frustrating for so many reasons, especially with his quirk."

Izuku's face scrunched up in confusion and he just barely managed to stop himself from asking Eraserhead why he thought Viridian had to have a quirk. He couldn't help feeling a little insecure. He knew that the heroes thought he had a quirk, that was a good thing, but a part of him wondered what it would be like if Eraserhead actually figured it out. He shuddered quietly, remembering all the other teachers he'd met. It was best if he never knew.

Did Eraserhead think he had a cool quirk? For some reason, Izuku felt like he was in an audition. Even if it wasn't real, Eraser would probably like him better if his imaginary quirk was something cool like Kacchan's or Denki's. Had he done a good job faking it? Izuku *really* wanted to ask him what his theory was, but if he did that, then it wouldn't even matter because then Eraser would know that he was nothing but a quirkless weakling who couldn't even catch one group of villains.

Thankfully, Kacchan asked for him, "Quirk? I'm probably gonna regret asking this, but what in the world do you think the nerd's quirk is?"

Eraser sighed, "Some sort of danger attraction with an element of danger avoidance thrown in. It's most likely passive, but powerful, considering how often he ends up in sticky situations and how often

he manages to avoid lethal injury. Viridian might not even know how powerful his quirk truly is, just that it puts him in danger frequently."

Izuku felt tears well up in his eyes. Why did hearing that feel both good and bad? Eraser's theory was super cool! If someone *did* have a quirk like that, they could be such an amazing hero and save so many people because they wouldn't have to seek out danger, they could just wait for it to come to them. It would be amazing...if it was actually true. But it wasn't. Izuku was just fooling them and soon enough Eraser would realize that it was all a lie and then he'd run away just like everyone else. The room was silent, so Izuku had to hold back a sniffle and wipe the tears away with his sleeve. This was what he wanted, wasn't it?

Then Kacchan started laughing.

It was like Eraser had just told the funniest joke of all time and Kacchan couldn't seem to get himself under control. He just kept laughing and gasping for air so long that Izuku's tears all dried up as his face turned hot and red like a tomato. Was it really so funny to think that he could have a powerful quirk? Not to mention that if he kept this up, Eraser was going to figure out something was up. The entire thing was mortifying for so many reasons.

And to make it worse, Eraser was starting to get annoyed, "Are you done?"

Kacchan tried to say something, but it just came out as a snort as he kept on laughing.

"Kacchan!" Izuku hissed under his breath. "Kacchan, shut up!"

Kacchan was loud enough to cover his voice, so he wasn't worried about being heard, but it still felt like an eternity until Kacchan finally calmed down enough to speak coherently, "A plot armor quirk? Seriously? I would say that you're so wrong it's not even funny, but I'd be lying because this is hilarious!"

Izuku inhaled sharply and he heard Eraser do the same, "You know what Viridian's quirk is?"

Kacchan stopped laughing.

Izuku held his breath. Was Kacchan actually going to tell him? He'd said that he wouldn't, but then again, when they were three he'd said they'd be friends forever, and look how well that turned out. What

would Eraser think? He was trapped in the bathroom, if Kacchan told Eraser to open the door, he didn't have any way to escape!

Finally, Kacchan spoke up softly, "I'm an informant. I know a lot of things."

Eraser gave a frustrated sigh, "Informants share info."

"Not this info, Eraserhead." Kacchan said seriously. "I owe Viridian a lot more than I'll ever be able to make up for, so if he doesn't want you knowing his quirk, I'm not gonna tell you."

Eraser groaned, "I know he saved your life, Kacchan, but if we knew what his quirk was, we could find him and get him on the path to being an actual hero."

"Believe me, I'm all for it." Kacchan said. "But that's something you need to bring up with him, not me."

"He doesn't want it." Eraser said. "We've tried offering him a chance at a licence so many times, but he still thinks it's impossible."

"Yeah, well, when you hear something enough, you might end up wondering if it's true." Kacchan grumbled.

Eraser sighed again and Izuku felt horrible. He was so annoying. Here Eraserhead was, stressing out about trying to get him to be a hero and Izuku couldn't even get the guts to tell him why it was impossible. He deserved to know! He really did, but Izuku was a coward and he just...he didn't want to lose everyone again, was that so wrong?

"Can you at least give me a hint?" Eraser said finally.

Kacchan was quiet for a long moment, "I can tell you that whatever his quirk is, it's definitely not powerful. Anything that you can think of that Viridian has accomplished? It's pure skill and determination. It's all him."

Izuku had to hold a hand over his mouth again as a scary sense of pride washed over him. There was maybe even a little bit of happiness? But that just made the second wave all the worse. How had he managed to fool Kacchan too?

They exchanged a few other niceties for a few minutes before the door opened and Eraserhead left. Izuku waited a few more minutes, both to be safe and to give the blotchyness on his face time to die down,

before slowly pushing open the door.

Kacchan only glanced at him, nodding as Izuku scurried past and to the door. He really hoped Mom wouldn't be disappointed when he told her he wanted to go home now. His visit with Kacchan had been exhausting.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 05.14.2021

Transformation

Chapter Summary

Viridian and Eraserhead have a little chat about an old friend.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Markus Westphal X
PJ
I'm totally a bee
Color-NS
TheTinyJeep

Memes!
X X X

“I’m fine.” Shouta repeated. Maybe if he said it enough, he’d be able to convince himself too. “It’s illogical to worry about that until we have confirmation that it actually was *him* at the attack.”

Tensei rolled his eyes, “I don’t know if you just haven’t been paying attention, Shou, but humans aren’t exactly logical. And you heard the description your witness gave of what Kurogiri looked like before the experiments. It’s him. You *know* it is.”

“It’s a strong possibility.” Shouta admitted. “But why would the villain factory keep him captive for so long? It’s been ten years, Tensei. It just doesn’t make any sense!”

“Maybe his quirk was just too good to pass up?” Tensei shrugged. “But he’s alive! That’s better than we ever expected, right? We probably even have a chance to get our friend back…”

“Don’t hold your breath.” Shouta inturreptued. “You weren’t at the USJ. You didn’t see him attacking the students. Even if he *is* Shirakumo on some level, he’s firmly on the side of the villains.”

“I guess you’re right.” Tensei groaned. “I just really wanted our friend back, you know? It’d be so cool! But I guess life’s more complicated than that.”

“Isn’t it always?” Shouta was tired. He really wanted a nap, but he knew he’d never be able to sleep with everything that was going through his brain. What he needed right now was to get his mind off of everything, and if he was able to check up on a troublesome vigilante while he was at it, all the better.

“Have you seen Viridian since the attack?” Tensei asked for a moment. “Does he even know the details of the attack yet or are we just letting him get whatever’s on the news for now?”

“Officially, no one’s talked to him.” Shouta scowled. “Unofficially, he probably knows just as much as we do at this point, if not more. I found out yesterday that Kacchan has been meeting him behind my back.”

Tensei looked like he was trying not to laugh, “Well, you gotta give the kid points for taking initiative.”

Shouta shot him an exhausted glare, “He knows what Viridian’s quirk is.”

“Wait, really?!” Tensei’s eyes widened. “Why haven’t you brought the kid in yet? Is his quirk not on the registry or something?”

“I said that Kacchan *knew* Viridian’s quirk, not that he had told me.” Shouta shook his head in frustration. “He absolutely refuses to give me anything except that it’s apparently weak. That’s all I’ve got.”

“I mean, you could always threaten to expel him?” Tensei suggested. “That might get him to talk.”

Shouta raised an eyebrow, “Do you really think Kacchan is the type to respond well to fear tactics?”

That made Tensei laugh, “Yeah, the kid would probably just double down, would’t he?”

“It’s all just so illogical.” Shouta huffed. “Kacchan won’t say anything because he feeels like he owes Viridian his life, but at the same time, you know that the problem child is probably blaming himself for not being there to stop the USJ attack and might even be suicidal again, which I could get him help for if I knew who he was, which I don’t because Kacchan won’t say anything!”

“Oof.” Tensei hissed. “That’s infuriating.”

Shouta scoffed, “That’s an understatement.”

Their comms crackled to life and Rock Lock’s voice came over the line, “Hey, Eraser. You there?”

“Yeah.” Shouta rubbed his eyes, grateful for the distraction. “What do you want?”

“I just saw your kid running north.” Rock Lock said. “I think he’s looking for you.”

Shouta stretched, “Thanks for the heads up. I’ll go check it out and see how he’s doing.”

“Good luck.” Rock Lock said.

The line went dead and Tensei laughed, “Seriously, you’re gonna need all the luck you can get, though. Kid’s getting pretty good.”

“Exactly why he should be a hero, not a vigilante.” Shouta sighed. “Hopefully I’ll be able to talk some sense into him this time.”

“Yeah, we both know that’s probably not going to happen.” Tensei chuckled. “But good luck dadding your son into submission!”

Shouta turned to glare at him, but he was already gone, so he just sighed and ran to find Viridian. At least the kid was alive, which meant that he was doing well enough to not do anything drastic, but still, therapy would be a massive improvement.

Viridian found him first, “Eraserhead! Wait up!”

Shouta stopped as the kid ran up to him, “Problem Child.”

“I’m really sorry I wasn’t there to help your students, Eraser!” The kid’s eyes were screwed up with tears and both of his hands were fisted into balls at his sides. “I should have figured out that the villains were attacking and helped stop them! I’m really really sorry!”

“It’s not your fault, kid.” Shouta gave a frustrated sigh. “Even with forewarning of the attack, we still weren’t able to prevent it. Don’t beat yourself up for villains being villians.”

“But…” Viridian hunched in on himself for a moment before getting a determined look in his eyes and straightening up. “I’ll make up for it! I promise!”

“Kid…” Shouta groaned. “You don’t have to...is that another packet? You spent the past few days digging into things you weren’t supposed to, didn’t you?”

“Um, maybe?” Viridian flashed him a guilty smile. “But it’ll help, won’t it?”

Shouta glared at him, “That remains to be seen. I’d really rather you did things like this with proper supervision. You know? Like the kind you’d get in the vigilante rehabilitation program?”

As expected, Viridian shook his head, “I’m not the kind of person you want in that program, Eraserhead. Save the spots for the people who deserve them.”

“Look in the mirror, problem child.” Shouta deadpanned.

Viridian smiled sadly, “I’m not who you think I am, Eraserhead. I’m not some powerful vigilante who can swoop in and save the day. I just do what I can, and even that’s not enough most of the time. If I wasn’t such a failure, the villains wouldn’t even have been able to get into

the school."

"UA's security is not your responsibility, problem child." Shouta groaned. "We just weren't prepared for a warp quirk.."

"Which wouldn't even have existed if I was actually a good vigilante." Viridian shoved the packet into his hands. "Most of those quirks...most of those *people,* were ones I fought. Maybe if I'd caught them sooner before they could show off their quirks...or if I'd known they were targets…?"

Shouta gave him a skeptical look and started flipping through the research he'd compiled, "Walk me through this, kid. Tell me what I'm looking at."

"Well, I looked through a lot of missing persons, specifically ones that had been instant villains or had run-ins with the villain factory or trigger in the past." Viridian started, his voice becoming more confident as he slipped into his comfort zone. "I found two main ones that could reasonably combine to create something like what you guys saw from Kurogiri at the USJ. Do you remember when I was working virtually?"

"You mean that time you broke your arm and kept doing vigilante work anyway?" Shouta asked sternly. "Yeah, it rings a bell."

Viridian winced, "Uh, yeah, that time. Well, uh, there was this teleporting villain, right? His quirk, Blink, was vision based, just like yours!"

"Yeah, he could teleport to anywhere he could see." Shouta nodded. "But the villian factory didn't have eyes inside UA."

"But if they combined it with the right quirk, they wouldn't need to." Izuku said. "There was this bartender that went missing from Amplifier's patrol area whose quirk let him see anywhere, just so long as he knew the exact location! If it was combined with Blink, then Remote Vision would theoretically allow the user to teleport anywhere if they knew the exact location."

Shouta looked at the sources the kid had compiled about the two quirks he'd mentioned. It checked out, even if it didn't explain why Shirakumo was needed. *If* he was needed. The kid had even included a lot of complicated quir theory that Shouta couldn't really make heads or tails out of, but knew that Nedzu would have a field day over, "This is impressive, kid. But you do realize that would only allow him to

warp himself, right?"

"That's where it starts getting a little more complicated." Viridian grimaced. "I read a lot about teleportation quirks, and I *think* I know what happened, but, uh, I'm missing a quirk…"

"Alright, that's fine." Shouta couldn't help slipping into his teacher mindset as he nodded patiently. "Tell me what you have so far."

Viridian frowned, "I'm like 98% sure that they used a quirk called *Darkfiguration.* When I fought the original holder, he could completely blend into the darkness. I thought it was some sort of darkness-based invisibility, but when I read his file, it said he was actually *becoming* the darkness if that makes sense."

"About as much sense as quirks normally do." Shouta said. "But the warp gates themselves looked fairly dark. What else?"

"Well, that's where I'm kinda stuck." Viridian huffed in frustration. "I mean, Kacchan said…"

He stopped suddenly with a squeak and stared at Shouta with wide eyes, looking almost terrified and Shouta rolled his eyes, "I already know you talked to Kacchan problem child."

"Is he gonna get in trouble for telling me?" Viridian asked softly. "He worked really hard to keep everyone safe, so it would be really unfair to punish him for…"

Shouta rubbed the bridge of his nose, "He's an informant, problem child. I'm not going to punish him for doing his job. And shouldn't you be worried more about yourself, *vigilante?* If anyone is going to get in trouble, it's going to be you."

"Oh, I'm used to that." Viridian said quickly. "But I needed to make sure because Kacchan said you're not like other teachers, so you might actually...uh, anyway, um, he said that the warp gates were kinda like mists?"

"Uh…" Shouta had trouble following that last sentence, especially when Viridian seemed to be trying to censor himself half-way through. "Yeah, they were kinda like mists. But what was that you said about me being a teacher?"

Viridian's eyes widened again, "Uh, what? Um, well, it's just that, you know, it's really not important..."

“Oh really.” Shouta gave a wild grin. “Then why are you trying to hide it?”

Viridian froze like a deer in the headlights and Shouta wanted to cheer. He wasn’t quite sure *what* he’d stumbled across, but it had to be a pretty big clue if the kid was this freaked out. A part of him felt guilty for making the kid so scared, but the other part was screaming for karma from all the heart attacks Viridian had given him. And if this could lead him to the kid’s identity…

Viridian laughed nervously, “You work in education, Eraserhead! Uh, you know how hard it is to find good teachers that actually care about the kids and stuff. It’s just that I didn’t want you to think that I hated all teachers or something like that! That’s it!”

Shouta narrowed his eyes and stared at the kid as some things fell into place, “Wait, Viridian...have you been abused by teachers in the past?”

“Abused?” Viridian waved his hands frantically in front of him. “No! Nothing like that! They weren’t trying to make me feel bad or anything, I don’t think, it’s just that the other students had a lot more potential, so they were just doing what they thought was right. I don’t blame them or anything, and it wasn’t *abuse.* I’m a vigilante, Eraser, I can take care of myself!”

Shouta felt sick, “Your teachers ignored your bullies, didn’t they?”

“No?” Viridian looked almost sad. “They paid a lot of attention to them, actually. It’s ok, Eraser, I’m fine.”

“Somehow I don’t think we’re talking about the same thing…” Shouta said. “Teachers should pay attention to *all* their students, problem child. If your teachers are ignoring you, then…”

“They’re not.” Viridian said firmly. “I don’t have those teachers anymore, anyway, so it’s a non-issue.”

“No, it’s not!” Shouta said incredulously. “If your teachers contributed to you being suicidal…”

“I’m not suicidal anymore, Eraser.” Viridian cut him off. “Like I said, it isn’t a big deal. And we’re getting distracted. The warp villain basically expanded parts of his body to create the gates, right?”

“You can’t just change the subject, Viridian.” Shouta challenged

Viridian grinned, determination in his eyes as he met the challenge, “Watch me.”

Shouta tried to argue again, but Viridian just steamrolled over him and refused to let him get a word in. Damn problem child.

“Anyway, so the warp villain.” Viridan started. “So Darkfiguration would have just made his body into darkness, not helped him teleport groups, but from what Kacchan told me, Kumo had some kind of mist quirk too, so I did some research. There’s still a lot we don’t know about quirk transfer, obviously, and quirk combinations especially because, yeah, but I looked into it and there’s a chance that Darkfiguration changed in reaction to Kumo’s quirk.”

Shouta groaned in defeat, “I thought that was the whole point? Quirks being transferred and changing in reaction to the new holder to become more powerful.”

Viridian nodded eagerly, “Yeah! So, uh, anyway, Kumo’s quirk *was* mists or clouds or something like that, right? So then, what if when Darkfiguration was added, it became *Cloudfiguration?* So instead of transforming into darkness, the holder would be able to transform into mist? And, then, since the teleporting quirks affect the holder’s body…”

“Then the mist-like portions of the body would be able to teleport in the same way.” Shouta said. He couldn’t really deny it anymore, could he? He could completely imagine Shirakumo using his clouds as a part of his body and with the quirks the kid had found, all the puzzle pieces fit together, even if he didn’t want to. “How did you even find all this, kid? It seems like you’ve got it all figured out.”

“Not quite.” Viridian had a frustrated pout on his face. “I’m missing Kumo’s original quirk. I searched the missing person’s list three times and couldn’t find it anywhere!”

“Because he’s not registered as missing.” Shouta sighed.

Viridian blinked, “What?”

Shouta took a deep breath, “ *Kumo,* as Ogawa knew him, was never registered as missing.”

“Why not?” Viridian tilted his head in confusion. “Do you think he didn’t have any family? Someone must have noticed he was gone!”

“Oh, they noticed.” Shouta muttered darkly. “Sorry, it’s just…do you remember when I told you about a friend of mine dying in the line of duty?”

Viridian nodded in concern, “Yeah. You said that, just like me, you threw yourself into fighting to cope after he died.”

“Yeah, well…” Shouta’s mouth was dry, but he pushed through it, forcing himself to admit it out loud, “Apparently he wasn’t as dead as we thought.”

Viridian’s eyes got comically wide and Shouta couldn’t do anything except laugh, even though it was the last thing he felt like doing at the moment, “Yep! You couldn’t find him on the missing person’s list because Oboro Shirakumo was reported as dead on arrival over ten years ago. But, hey, immortal supervillains can just get away with anything, right? They’ve got power and connections, so it doesn’t matter whose lives they ruin if they get to play their little games!”

He knew he was losing his head, but as illogical as it was, he didn’t want to stop. He shouldn’t be this vulnerable in front of a kid. He should be doing this with literally anyone else. Tensei, Mic, Midnight, even Nedzu would probably be a willing shoulder to cry on, but for some reason, no, Shouta was breaking down in front of a kid.

As he was almost bowled over by Viridan’s hug, he couldn't’ help but wonder if that was because the kid already knew what it was like to be broken.

“I’m so sorry.” Even though Shouta’s eyes were just as chronically dry as ever, Viridian was crying enough for both of them as he squeezed tightly. “Y-you lost your friend! And...and now he’s different and you don’t know...and you want to save him and...I’m sorry!”

Shouta patted the kid’s head for a moment, letting himself sink into the kid’s attempts at comfort. He felt tired. He felt tired and angry and sad and so many other things at the moment, but if this dumb, reckless teenager could fight his way through months of depression and self-hatred, then maybe Shouta could fight his way through this whole mess.

“Does anyone know?” Viridian sniffed and pulled away. “I know you said Present Mic was his friend too.”

“They know.” Shouta said. “We’re all processing.”

“You guys shouldn't be alone right now.” Viridian said stubbornly, tears already drying on his cheeks. “You should go to them.”

“I am literally in the middle of patrol right now, problem child.” Shouta deadpanned.

Instead of giving into his logic, however, the kid just pouted, “If you don’t call them, I will. I’ll go find a way to hack into the comms right now and send them running to help you.”

Shouta rolled his eyes, “This isn’t a villain attack, kid.”

“No.” In a flash, Viridian was across the roof. “But it’s still a chance to help people! Say hi to Mic and Midnight when they get here, Eraser!”

Shouta’s jaw dropped as he watched the kid disappear between two buildings, had that kid just…? He shook his head and started running. He didn’t want to have to deal with Mic’s yelling if Viridian reached him first.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 05.17.2021

Blank

Chapter Summary

The Bakusquad comes for a visit.

Chapter Notes

Congrats on getting this fic to 1 million hits!

Art!
Crismins
Avroux
Dottie
Memes!
X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki really hated hospitals. It was understandable! Everyone hated hospitals! The only problem was that Recovery Girl had figured that out and that old hag had gotten together with *his* old hag and decided that he needed an extra day of boredom to *make sure the healing sticks.* Bullshit. They just wanted to punish him so he wouldn't get hurt as bad next time. It was working, but still.

To make things even worse, because Katsuki would never admit that it was better, the old hag had somehow gotten into his phone and gone through his contacts to invite his classmates to visit him. It was embarrassing. And loud considering that the entire extrovert crew had shown up. So now he was stuck with Kirishima, Mina, Sero, and even Kaminari, who had gotten released yesterday, crowded around the foot of his bed talking over one another as they tried to make him feel better or something. It was annoying and sweet at the same time.

Shinso had gotten the invite too, but he didn't know anyone else, so he'd retreated into the corner. Katsuki had been half-concerned about him feeling left out until he'd caught Shinso smirking at his predicament with absolutely zero sympathy. He should try being trapped by a bunch of high energy dimwits and see how well *he* liked it, the asshole.

"I'm surprised the doctors haven't thrown you extras out yet." Katsuki griped. "Aren't hospitals supposed to be about recovery and *rest* ?"

“You can’t recover on your own, Bakubro!” Kirishima pouted. “You gotta have friends so you don’t get too lonely!”

“Oh, yeah! That reminds me!” Mina’s grin couldn’t spell out anything good as she turned to them. “I wanted to introduce you guys to my uncle...ish! He’s here in the hospital too, so we can all go visit him!”

Oh no, she was totally talking about Ogawa, wasn’t she?

“What the…? Pinky!” Katsuki scowled. “It’s bad enough that I have to deal with all of you! What makes you think he wants to?”

“Oh, you know you love us.” Mina stuck out her tongue. “I asked him yesterday and he said he was totally down to meet everyone!”

Katsuki groaned. He’d already lost this fight, hadn’t he? He couldn’t just roll over though, so he had to at least *try* to fight back, “Isn’t there the whole privacy issue and all that?”

Mina shrugged, “We’re all here students. Well, except for Mr. Gucci Eyebags over thre, but he seems cool enough and he wouldn’t be here if you didn’t trust him, so it’s probably fine. Come on, let’s go!”

She started toward the door and the rest of them had no choice but to follow along like lost little ducklings. Katsuki groaned as he heaved himself from the bed. There was still a little twinge of pain in his legs, but Recovery Girl had done her magic well an he didn’t have to use a stupid wheelchair this time, which would have been even worse. He could only imagine the chaos that would be happening right now if he had to trust these morons to wheel him around, and that chaos involved a substantial amount of running into walls. Yeah, walking was definitely the safer option.

“Wait!” Kaminari stumbled slightly as he jogged to catch up with Mina. “Where are we going?”

Katsuki rolled his eyes, “To visit a friend of mine that got possessed by her aunt.”

The others stopped walking and there was a moment of shocked silence before Shinso let out a low whistle, “Wow, Bakugo. No wonder everyone thinks you’re a cryptid.”

Katsuki glared at him, “You know you don’t actually have to tag along, right? It’s not like Racoon Eyes is scary enough to force you.”

“Oh no,” Shinso grinned, “this is way too entertaining to pass up. I’m coming.”

“Well, I mean, glad to have you, but, uh…” Sero looked lost as he glanced around, “I’m still confused about how the spirit of Mina’s aunt possessed someone.”

“It's not her *spirit* .” Mina rolled her eyes and started walking again. “It’s more like her quirk? And don’t be so rude, blasty. Autie Dai isn’t *possessing* him or anything creepy like that! Or, well, I mean, it is *kinda* creepy, but only because some mad scientist villains gave him her quirk and now...well, it’s kinda hard to explain….?”

“It’s like her ghost is living in his head.” Kaminari’s eyes were impossibly wide. “A part of her stayed with the quirk and is a part of him now.”

“Yeah!” Mina looked impressed. “Wow, Kaminari, I can’t even explain it that well, how is it fair that you come in and describe it perfectly! You haven’t even met him yet!”

“Heh.” Kaminari shrugged awkwardly. “I guess I’m just cool like that?”

Katsuki snorted, “Yeah right, like any of you extras are actually cool, but whatever, that’ll probably just make him like you more.”

Denki’s mind was racing as Mina led him through the hospital. He could tell that Kirishima, Sero, and that new kid that Bakugo had introduced them to were still skeptical about the whole *villains gave this guy another quirk* thing, but everyone else was going along with it, so they hadn’t said anything. Denki, however, was just trying to decide whether he was nervous or excited. If he was connecting the dots right, then that meant that Mina’s kinda-sorta uncle was like *him*. Sure, One for All was probably a completely different beast and if Izuku was right about all the side effects of quirk transfer then this guy was probably in for a pretty bumpy ride, but even without meeting the guy, Denki could feel this weird sort of kinship with him. Not that he’d be able to say anything about it, considering that One for All was supposed to be a secret, but still, it was super cool!

Mina and Bakugo obviously knew their way, because they led them through the winding hallways without any hesitation, stopping at a door that looked just like every other one. Bakugo pounded on the door a few times before slamming it open, “Oi! Tentacle Freak! Are

you crazy? Why in the world would you sign up to meet a bunch of annoying extras?"

"Maybe because I'm not a misanthrope?" The guy on the bed was grinning as they filed into the room and Denki could see why Bakugo had called him *tentacle freak.* His hair was made of thick tentacles that were almost black with hints of green and purple that seemed to shift in the light and were long enough to reach almost to his shoulder blades. The dark tentacles contrasted starkly with the white electrodes that were glued to his head alongside all the other medical equipment.

When the guy saw them, he turned away from Bakugo and gave them a bright smile, "Hey! You guys must be Kacchan's friends! I'm glad he hasn't scared everyone away with his *I'm so angry and antisocial* act yet."

"Oi!" Bakugo hit him in the arm. "Stop talking about me like I'm not right here! Extras, meet Ogawa. Ogawa, meet the extras."

"You must have the patient of a saint." Sero teased. "How did you even get him to admit you were friends?"

Ogawa glanced around the room before leaning forward conspiratorially, "I bribed him with icecream and good feelings."

They all laughed as Bakugo glared, "I hate all of you."

"So, like, how does any of this work?" Sero asked. "You're like, Mina's uncle...aunt thing?"

Ogawa smiled sheepishly, "Yeah? I mean, kinda? It's complicated. But she's excited too."

"Sounds cool." Kirishima said. "So, like, Mina's aunt is just...there?"

Ogawa shrugged, "Basically, yeah. Like, it's kind of a trippy feeling, but like, I've got two other people's quirks, and a part of them came along for the ride, so they're just here, experiencing everything right alongside me."

"Wait, all the time?!" Denki's eyebrows shot up. "You don't like, have to be super calm or something?"

Ogawa frowned thoughtfully, "Nope. They're just like...a program running in the background, I guess is a good way to describe it."

“It’s super weird!” Mina said cheerfully. “So I wouldn’t worry about it too much. I just get a fun bonus uncle!”

“And I get an extra headache.” Bakugo rolled his eyes. “Seriously, knowing you guys separately was enough of a migraine.”

“Aww!” Ogawa laughed. “Don’t be like that, Kacchan! I know you’re secretly…”

Suddenly, his face went blank and Denki felt a creeping feeling of *wrongness* crawl down his spine as the room went silent. He looked at Bakugo and Mina, but they looked just as confused as he felt, so this was apparently not part of their normal weirdness.

After a moment, Bakugo turned to Shinso, “Did you…?”

Shinso shook his head frantically, “No! I mean, I know how this looks, but I didn’t even say anything to him, so I couldn’t even have...I didn’t do anything to him, I swear!”

“Calm down, Eyebags, I wasn’t accusing you or anything.” Bakugo growled and turned back to Ogawa. “But if you didn’t brainwash him, then what’s going on?”

A brainwashing quirk *would* explain the sudden blankness, and he knew Izuku would be freaking out over such a cool quirk, but if it weren’t for the fact that everyone else was freaking out, Denki would have just assumed that Ogawa had gone to the headspace to talk to his vestiges. That didn’t make any sense though, because he said that he didn’t *have* to be in the headspace to interact with his quirks’ past holders like Denki did, which was another thing Izuku would probably freak out over. This was all just so confusing.

“Umm…” Kirishima glanced at them. “Maybe we should call the doctor?”

“That sounds like a *great* plan.” Mina huffed in relief before slamming the call button. “Ok, but uh…wait, what’s he doing now?”

They all took a step back as Ogawa stood up and started messing with some things on the medical machines beside him. That...didn’t seem like the safest thing to do and it just felt so *wrong,* especially because his facial expression still hadn’t changed from the sullen blankless he’d slipped into a minute ago. It was just plain *creepy*.

“Uh, Ogawa? Buddy?” Kirishima reached a hand out to grab his

shoulder. “Is something wrong? Maybe you should let the doctors do that?”

Kirishima yelped and hardened his skin as Ogawa’s tentacles suddenly extended and slammed him into the wall behind him. Denki gulped and activated his quirks, letting the electricity build beneath his skin as he shifted into a fighting stance. What was going on? The guy had been so nice, were they really gonna have to fight him? And to make it even worse, he still had that creepy blank expression on his face. It was just *wrong*.

The door slammed open and a small team of doctors and nurses came rushing in, “Everybody stand back, he can get confrontational when he’s like this. We’re going to have to sedate him.”

“Like what?” Bakugo growled. “What the fuck is going on?!”

Instead of answering, the doctor took out a needle and jabbed it into the tentacle that had reached for him as soon as he walked in. Ogawa had turned to him, blank faced, but looking ready for a fight, but he didn’t get the chance before his eyes drooped and he started to sway. Bakugo and Mina ran to catch him as he collapsed.

The doctor wiped his forehead, “Well, it looks like we’re actually getting good at that. We were hoping this one was just a blip on the brain scanner, but I guess not.”

“What even was that?!” Mina sounded panicked. “He just...he wasn’t there anymore! Has this happened before?!”

“Unfortunately, yes.” The doctor sighed, “It started a few days ago and we’re not sure exactly what’s happening, hence the brain scanner.”

“Is it just seizures or something?” Sero freaked out. “But like, that doesn’t look like seizures.”

The doctor shook his head, “There’s still so much we don’t know about the experiments he went through, but we assume that, since he was meant to be a weapon, there must have been some measures put in place to control him. The first few times it happened, we did think it was seizures because he just sat there and he looked almost like a robot awaiting orders. I’m sure you saw that phase.”

Denki looked around at the others, who were also nodding hesitantly. That seemed like a good way to describe the blankness before he’d started moving, but they hadn’t given him any orders, so who had?”

The doctor frowned as he continued, “It wasn’t until yesterday afternoon when he started trying to harm himself that we realized it wasn’t just a side effect of the experiments, hence the sedation. Thankfully, it appears that the past users of his quirks are unaffected by the quirk and have been able to snap him out of it with considerable effort. It’s been happening more frequently, as well, but there’s not much we can do for him before we figure out how to sever whatever quirk connection the villain factory is using to control him. Rest assured that we’re doing the best we can, but for the moment, our main focus is to keep him from following through on what we think the villains are ordering him to do.”

Shinso raised an eyebrow, “Which is?”

Denki had a sinking feeling that he already knew as the doctor hesitated, an awkward look on his face as he searched for the right words, but it was Bakugo that said what they were all thinking, “They want him to off himself to tie off loose ends.”

The doctor sighed heavily, “You all should go. The sedative we gave him is extremely potent, so he’ll be out for at least the next hour, but if things keep going the way they are, we might have to consider keeping him sedated until we can break the villains’ control.”

There was nothing else to say as they all trudged out of the room and followed Bakugo back to his room. Denki’s brain raced with all the new information and tried to make it fit any sort of order so that he could actually be coherent when he told Izuku about it. There was so much more going on than he understood. Just how much info was he missing?

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 05.21.2021

Care

Chapter Summary

Izuku gets lonely.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Lacuna Town
Law
My toast, It's ruined
Alix.Nerdball
Liza

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku didn't really know what had come over him last night, but he hadn't really known how to help Eraserhead, so he'd somehow decided that the best option was to lead him to people who could and somehow pulled the audacity out of nowhere to do just that. he picked at his lunch, angry that he couldn't help feeling almost jealous of Eraserhead, and then he felt guilty for being jealous, and he also felt a little bit like a hypocrite, which made him feel even more guilty and the whole process was just illogical and stupid. But the truth was that Eraser actually *had* those people...Izuku didn't.

He shouldn't be jealous! It sucked that one of Eraserhead's best friends was torn from him! But at least he had friends to tear away in the first place. Sure, Izuku had Mom, but she was his mother and was therefore obligated to love him, so it didn't feel like she counted. He had Kacchan too, of course, but even if they were slowly figuring things out, Izuku couldn't say they were *close.*

And then there was Denki. He was the closest Izuku had ever come to what Eraserhead had, but a big part of it still didn't feel *real* sometimes. He was just a quirkless weakling, how could he deserve the friendship of someone as amazing as Denki? Eraser would probably just roll his eyes if he could hear what Izuku was thinking right now. He'd probably say that friendship wasn't something people *deserved* , it was just something they tried to make work, but Izuku

just couldn't figure out why every time he spiraled, he pushed Denki away. So between being quirkless and his own bad habits, he didn't have a group of people to rely on like Eraser did, but Izuku wanted one. So badly.

Which was exactly why he felt like a hypocrite. He hadn't even hesitated to drag Eraserhead to his friends when he was having a hard time, but how many times had Izuku just run away when Eraser had tried to help him? He just felt like such a burden. He wanted to be comforted, but he didn't want to bother Eraser or Denki just because he was a little sad. It was like he just couldn't win!

"Izuku, baby?" Mom's concerned voice startled him into dropping his fork. "Are you feeling alright? You've hardly touched your food…"

Izuku forced a bright smile, "I'm fine, Mom, really! I'm just a little tired, I guess…"

Mom gave him a kind look that made it clear she didn't believe a word of that, "You're worried about Kaminari and Katsuki, aren't you?"

Izuku latched onto the half truth like a lifeline, even though it was pretty much just an excuse for his mood, "Is it really that obvious?"

"It's exactly what I would expect you to feel." Mom said. "They're training to be heroes, so danger is a part of that, but that doesn't mean you aren't still going to be worried about them. If you'd gone into the hero course like you wanted to when you were younger, I would have worried about you too."

"I'm sorry…" Izuku shrunk in on himself. This was exactly why he was a vigilante, not a hero. "I don't want you to worry about me."

Mom tilted her head, "Do you not want me to love you?"

Izuku startled and stared up at her with wide eyes, "What?!"

Mom giggled, "Well, you worry about the people you care about, baby! I worry because I love you, not because I don't trust you or because I think you're going to get yourself hurt. I just don't want you to be in pain."

"Oh…" Izuku's head spun slightly. "But I don't want people to worry about me."

“I know, baby.” Mom smiled sadly. “But it’s part of what makes caring about someone worth it.”

Izuku bit his lip and let himself process that, “But don’t you hate it? I don’t want to hurt you, or Denki, or anyone! I...I just want you guys to be happy.”

Mom reached for his hand, “We are. You do more to make us happy than you do to make us worry.”

Izuku tried to hide a wince of guilt, but luckily his phone vibrated and gave him an excuse, “Uh, it’s Denki. He wants to meet up. Can I…”

“You don’t have to ask, Izuku, I trust you.” Mom squeezed his hand. “Just don’t push him away, ok? I know those old bullies tried to convince you otherwise, but you’re allowed to have people that love you, baby.”

Izuku swallowed thickly and gave a jerky nod before rushing out. Denki’s message hadn’t been anything urgent, he didn’t think, but at the same time, it hadn’t been one of their normal, silly texts. It had sounded kinda serious and actually used proper punctuation for once, which wasn’t a big deal, but with his conversation with Mom echoing in his head, he just wanted to let himself be worried about his friend. It was unfair how much easier it was to worry than to be worried about.

When he got to the park, Denki grinned and jumped off the swings, “Hey dude! How’ve you been?”

Instinctively, Izuku pushed all his tangled emotions aside, “I’ve been doing really well! So the doctors say you’re good to go?”

Denki nodded, “Yeah! I mean, Recovery Girl had a lot to do with that, obviously, but classes are starting again tomorrow, so Bakugo and I are gonna be back just in time!”

“That’s awesome!” Izuku grinned. “So...your text sounded like you wanted to talk about something?”

Denki bit his lip in worry and led him over to a quiet corner behind some bushes where they wouldn't be overheard. “It’s just...me and a bunch of others visited Bakugo this morning.”

Izuku froze, his brain conjuring worst case scenarios faster than Denki could generate lightning. Had Kacchan told him about Izuku being

Viridian? Why would he do that when he hadn't even told Eraser? Oh no, what if Kacchan had said something about their relationship in middle school and made it seem really bad and now Denki was angry or what if…

Denki was too wrapped up in his own thoughts to realize that Izuku was panicking, "We ended up meeting a friend of his. A friend with multiple quirks."

"Oh…" Izuku's panic attack stuttered to a stop. "Uh...that must have been interesting?"

"It was weird." Denki let out a stressed chuckle. "I, uh, really wanted to talk to him more about One for All, but like, you're not even supposed to know, and I don't think we were supposed to know about him either, but, uh, it just sort of happened. Also, remember when you said that most quirk transfers are because of villains? I don't think this guy got to choose whether or not to accept."

Izuku nodded, "Yeah...you were lucky it was a hero that approached you."

"I don't know. The differences are just…" Denki shrugged, "He gets to interact with his past holders all the time, but I have to short out to even think about talking to mine. It almost makes me feel lonely by comparison."

"I'm sorry. I know I'm not in your head, but..." Izuku nudged him gently, "At least you have me!"

Denki laughed, "Yeah, I do! But let's be honest, if you were in my head, I'd be a lot smarter."

Izuku rolled his eyes, "You *are* smart, Denks, I've already told you that!"

He gave him a cheeky grin, "And maybe if you say it another hundred times, I'll actually start to believe you."

Izuku pouted, "Stubborn. Why won't you believe me?"

"Well maybe, *you* should believe *me* ." Denki insisted. "You're one of the coolest people I know."

Izuku gave him a look, "You are literally in the hero course. I can't even compete."

Denki shrugged, “They didn’t teach me how to fight. They didn’t help me adjust to a whole new quirk. They didn’t even have to suffer through half of my bad flirting attempts!”

“You’re getting better!” Izuku defended. “And I wasn’t suffering.”

“Oh?” Denki wiggled his eyebrows. “Are you saying you *like* me flirting with you? I can do it more often if that’s the case.”

“Nevermind.” Izuku blushed. “You need all the practice you can get.”

“Is that permission?” Denki asked. “Because I can keep heaping on the pick-up lines all day! Who knows, I might even mean some of them!”

Denki froze a half-second later as he seemingly realized what he’d said, “No! Uh, not that I don’t mean them, you’re amazing and any guy would be lucky to...ugh, not that, um, sorry, I mean, you deserve the compliments, not the flirting, not that you don’t deserve the flirting too, but, uh...will you just take away the shovel so I can stop digging?”

Izuku just stared at him, “Denks...do you...you *like* me?!”

“No...yes? I’m not sure?” Denki hunched in on himself. “I don’t know, I guess. I know you’re super cool and sweet and nice and everything that I *could* like in a guy, so I don’t know if I just like you as a best friend, or if it could be something more and I’m just too scared of losing you...but considering that I basically just confessed because of dumb flirts, I think it’s probably just that I like you. I’m sorry, this is awkward. Can we just forget this ever happened? I mean, I think I still have the shovel, so we can just bury this entire conversation in the hole I just dug for myself!”

Izuku giggled, “I don’t think you could ever lose me, not unless you wanted to, in which case it would make me really sad, but I’d leave you alone. You’re basically the best friend I’ve ever had, and you’re willing to put up with me when no one else is, so…”

“I’m not putting up with you, Izuku.” Denki pouted. “I really do like spending time with you!”

“And I like spending time with you.” Izuku said. “But you don’t have to feel obligated to like me just because we spend a lot of time together.”

“But I *do* like you.” Denki groaned. “Or at least I think I do? Ugh, why

are feelings so confusing?! I mean, do *you* like me?"

"I care about you." Izuku answered finally. "I mean, Mom says that you worry about people you care about, and I worry about you, and I enjoy spending time with you. But I don't think it matters whether I like you that way or not because you deserve better than a quirkless loser who can't stop running away from his problems."

Denki looked at him incredulously for a long moment, "You did not just talk about my friend that way."

Izuku wrinkled his nose in confusion, "What?"

"No." Denki nodded resolutely and grabbed his hand. "No. I'm not gonna let you sell yourself short like that."

"What?' Izuku's fighting instincts were the only thing that kept him from stumbling as Denki dragged him out of the bushes and started pulling him down the street. "Denks, what are you…"

"I'm taking you on a date." Denki said. There was a light blush on his cheeks, but he didn't let his embarrassment stop him as he kept pulling Izuku down the street. "I'm gonna show you that you deserve to be cared about and if you don't like me by the end of it, then we just call it a boys day and stay best friends, ok?"

"Denki, you don't have to feel obligated to..." Izuku insisted, but Denki cut him off.

"You aren't an obligation Izuku." The fire in Denki's eyes took Izuku's breath away as he stared at him in determination. "And I'm about to do my best to prove it."

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 05.24.2021

Undo

Chapter Summary

Kacchan has good ideas sometimes.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Claire;P X
That's so Yikes X X
Caws
Joshonboard
jacktier144

Cosplay!
eeveeiseevil.cos

Playlists!
Milk_Sicle
Viridenki:troublemagnet

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

By the time Izuku walked in the door, he was in such an obvious daze that Mom picked up on it immediately. She wrung her hands in worry, fretting as she looked him over, “Izuku, what’s wrong? Did something happen? Are you hurt? What is it, baby?”

Izuku blinked a few times, then panicked when he realized that *she* was panicking, “It’s nothing bad! I’m fine!”

Mom huffed, “Well, obviously *something* happened, baby. What is it? You know you can talk to me, right?”

Izuku nodded quickly, but still hesitated for a moment, biting his lip, “Um...Denki kinda…”

Mom’s face fell, “Oh…baby, I’m so sorry…”

“No, it’s not *that!* I mean, I wouldn’t blame him if he decided not to be my friend anymore, but, um... ” Izuku smiled hesitantly. “I think he

just took me on a date?"

Mom's eyes widened and she grinned, pulling him to the couch, "Tell me *everything,* baby."

Katsuki couldn't sleep. For some reason, he'd just assumed that because Ogawa had escaped the villain factory, that they'd be able to protect him and he'd be safe, but looking back, it was pretty obvious that he had been a naive idiot. Of course the vilain factory would have ways of tying off loose ends! Using a brainwashing quirk to do so, however, just left a really nasty taste in Katsuki's mouth. With assholes like All for One out there doing shit like this, no wonder Shinso had gotten bullied so much…

Katsuki shot up in bed at the thought. His first assumption when Ogawa had gone blank like that was that Shinso had somehow accidentally caught him in his quirk, but even Shinso himself had seemed panicked for half a second because *he had a brainwashing quirk!* Katsuki grabbed his phone and ran out the door, barely taking the time to put on his shoes as he searched through his contacts.

Izuku picked up on the second ring, "Kacchan? What are you doing up in the middle of the night?"

Katsuki ignored the question. There were more important things to think about, "Can a brainwashing quirk undo a brain washing quirk?"

"Like two different quirks? Or is the quirk undoing itself?" Izuku asked. "I'm sorry, I guess I'm still a little confused?"

"Nevermind." Katsuki replied gruffly. "Where are you right now?"

"At home?" Izuku answered hesitantly. "Are you ok…?"

Kacchan cut him off, "And Auntie?"

There was a long moment of silence, "Asleep."

Katsuki nodded resolutely, "I'm on my way. See you in five."

"...but you live ten minutes away?"

Izuku stared at the receiver in confusion, but kacchan had already hung up. He rolled over and cancelled his vigilante alarm even though it wasn't set to go off for another hour. At this point he probably

wasn't going to get to sleep anyway. Mom had ended up demanding a full play-by-play and they'd stayed up way too late making cookies as they talked and squealed together. He'd only managed to convince her to go to bed a little over an hour ago and even then, Izuku himself was still too keyed up to sleep.

He'd been so nervous when Denki had grabbed his hand and declared that they were going on a date. He'd been half-convinced that he'd change his mind halfway through and end their friendship despite his own insistence that they'd stay friends whether it went well or not. Izuku still couldn't believe that that *hadn't* happened and he couldn't help wondering why he'd been so convinced that it would, especially considering that Denki had never given him any evidence that he was considering ending their friendship. Izuku's brain had just jumped to the worst possible conclusion and now he was left feeling happy and a little bit silly because looking back, there hadn't been anything to panic about.

One of the things that had been keeping him awake was obviously just shocked happiness for how well the date had gone, but the other was the thought that if he'd been wrong about this afternoon going terribly, what else had he been wrong about? Izuku couldn't explore that train of thought for long though, because if he did, he would start panicking. Denki had still agreed to be his friend and even taken him on a date even with everything, so why was he so sure that the heroes would wrap him in bubble wrap if they knew he was quirkless? Was he missing out on other close friendships because he was too scared to let himself get caught?

Thankfully, Kacchan had called and given him something else to panic about. Izuku took a deep breath and started reviewing what he knew about brainwashing quirks. A lot of it depended on the natural limitations of the quirk, but he couldn't think of any reason why a quirk wouldn't be able to undo itself, they would just have to order the person to ignore the first order.

The other possibility, the question of one brainwashing quirk being able to undo another, posed a few more issues. In that case, it would depend on both the relative natural strengths of the quirks as well as the strength of the users. Did the two quirks work the same way? Because if they both affected the brain, it was probably possible, but what if one took root in the brain and the other was more like a puppeteer quirk that affected the limbs and bypassed the brain entirely, then even if opposing orders were given, they wouldn't really cancel out.

Izuku's thoughts were interrupted by a soft knock at the door. It was just loud enough for Izuku to hear it without waking up Mom and he ran to answer it, opening the door to see Kacchan in his pajamas, breathing hard from the run, "Hey, are you ready to go?"

Izuku looked at him in confusion. "What?"

Kacchan looked annoyed, "Get your shoes and hurry up already, nerd! I'm not about to wait and risk being too late to save him again."

Izuku jumped into action, putting on his shoes as fast as he could and grabbing whatever hoodie was on the hook by the door, since it was still a little chilly out at night. He still had no idea what was going on, but Kacchan wouldn't have run all the way to his house for no reason, so he'd just have to figure it out on the way. He pulled the hoodie over his head and ran to keep up with Kacchan, who was already halfway down the street, "Kacchan! Wait up!"

Hitoshi scrolled through his phone, debating whether he should get up and make himself a cup of tea. He probably wouldn't be able to sleep for at least another two hours anyway, but the tea would at least break up the monotony. He got up and stretched before heading to the kitchen. Did he still have chamomile or had he used all of that already?

A soft knock on the door made him freeze. The only people who would be knocking on his door in the middle of the night were police or murderers, and he really didn't want to deal with either of them, so he resolutely ignored it and turned back to making his tea. The knock came again, slightly louder this time, before whoever it was apparently gave up. Hitoshi let out a breath he hadn't quite realized he was holding.

Then his phone rang.

Hitohsi jumped, spilling water all over the counter and cursed as he grabbed both a rag and his phone, "Bakugo? What do you want?"

"Why aren't you opening your door?" Bakugo demanded. "I know damn well you're awake right now."

"Wait, that's you?!" Hitoshi scowled and threw the rag down on the counter. "I thought it was a murderer!"

"It will be if you don't get out here right now." Bakugo growled.

Hitoshi was almost tempted to make him wait. He deserved it after giving him a heart attack like that, because who in their right mind just showed up at someone's house in the middle of the night and didn't think that was creepy? Bakugo, apparently, but Hitoshi had to admit that he was just a little curious and this was better than boredom, so he hung up the phone and went to the door. Bakugo looked pissed off, but that was fairly normal. What wasn't normal was the kid standing next to him drowning in what must be a custom made Eraserhead hoodie, looking just as confused as Hitoshi felt.

"Took you long enough." Bakugo huffed. "Hurry up and get your shoes, we're leaving."

Hitoshi sighed, "Bakugo, it is literally one o'clock in the morning. What are you even doing here?"

The look that Bakugo gave him was more of a challenge and Hitoshi didn't know whether he should feel excited or scared out of his mind. "You wanna be a hero? Then hurry up and come on already because this is your chance to actually do something heroic."

By the time Hitoshi's brain actually caught up to his actions, he was walking quickly alongside Bakugo and his mystery friend with no idea of where they were going or even exactly why. He wasn't about to give up a chance to be a hero, though, and they were already on their way, so he figured he might as well go along with it.

It didn't look like Bakugo was going to bother with introductions any time soon, so Hitoshi turned to the new kid, "So, uh, you like Eraserhead?"

The kid almost jumped out of his skin, "What? W-why would you say that?!"

Hitoshi nodded to his hoodie, "I haven't seen that merch online from any of the normal creators, which means it's probably custom ordered, right? I don't meet many other people who even know who he is."

"Oh…" he bit his lip. "I mean…"

Bakugo snorted, "Oh, don't let him fool you, the nerd pretty much prefers Eraserhead to any other hero."

"Kacchan!" the kid scolded, a bright blush on his face. "It, uh, it was a gift."

Hitoshi nodded, “Cool. So, Bakguo, do you mind explaining what’s going on?”

Hoodie kid nodded, “Yeah, I’ve been wondering that too. It has something to do with brainwashing quirks, right?”

Hitoshi almost stopped walking, looking at Bakugo in betrayal, “What?”

The kid, who Hitoshi just decided to call Hoodie since he obviously wasn’t going to be getting a real name, didn’t seem to notice his distress though, because he just kept walking, “I mean, brainwashing quirks have so many possibilities, but from what you said, it sounded like you wanted to counteract brainwashing? Are we just working with one quirk or with multiple.”

“Multiple. I don’t know much about the one we’re gonna be fighting, but Eyebags here can tell you about the other one.” Bakugo answered quickly, turning to Hitoshi, “The nerd is a top notch analyst. If there’s a chance we can use your quirk to stop whatever’s happening to Ogawa’s brain, he’ll be able to figure it out.”

“It’s not…I’m not really that…” Hoodie stopped. “Wait, what’s happening with Ogawa?!”

“There’s some stupid quirk linking him back to the villain factory.” Bakugo scowled. “They can just make him bluescreen at any time and take control like some stupid toy soldier or something.”

“Oh…” Hoodie frowned. “That’s…ok, and it’s Shinso, right? How does your quirk work?”

Hitoshi glared at him, “Are you sure you want to know?”

Hoodie, idiotically, nodded, “I just think quirks are really cool and if we want to…”

Hitoshi only took control of him for half a second, but it was enough to make him feel sick. Seeing him blank like that was just one more reminder that his quirk was meant for villainy. Why were these two talking like he could save someone when it was a quirk like his that was the problem in the first place?

Hoodie shook himself out when Hitoshi released his control, then grinned, “Ok, that’s really cool. Kacchan, that’s kinda what you meant by bluescreen, right?”

“Yep.” Bakugo nodded and led them down another street. “What do you think?”

Hoodie hummed thoughtfully, “Well, I still need to see the other quirk, but the good news is that if the *bluescreen* mode looks the exact same, then there’s a chance the two quirks will be able to cancel each other out, but…”

Hitoshi looked at him suspiciously, “But what?”

Hoodie shrugged, “But that depends entirely on which one’s stronger.”

Izuku’s brain was whirling with ideas and theories and he really wanted to ask Shinso more about his quirk, but he was acting the same way Izuku acted when anyone brought up quirklessness, so he decided not to push until he knew which questions he really needed to ask, which meant he had to see the other quirk first. It was going to be a lot more difficult to figure out the limitations of the second quirk, considering that they were only going to be able to see its effects, but Izuku would figure it out. He wasn’t about to *not* save someone, just because it was going to be challenging!

The trip to the hospital didn’t take as long as Izuku had expected, but that might have been due to the fact that Kacchan had jogged half of it and the other two had had to either catch up or get left behind. Izuku was used to outrunning heroes, so he didn’t mind, but he could tell that Shinso was pretty grateful when they finally arrived.

They got a few weird looks from the nurses and receptionist as they made their way to Ogawa’s room, considering that it was the middle of the night and all three of them were in their pajamas, but most everyone they ran into took one look at Kacchan and just seemed to accept it. Kacchan had always been powerful like that. Even in elementary school he’d been able to get away with anything.

When they got to what Izuku assumed was the correct wing, a doctor finally stopped them, “It’s not visiting hours yet, boys.”

“We don’t care.” Kacchan growled. “You’ve got a problem and we’re here to fix it! I’m not gonna wait ‘till some goddamn visiting hours to save my friend.”

“Please?” Izuku didn’t think puppy dog eyes would work as well on the doctor as they sometimes did on Mom or Eraserhead, but he figured it was worth a try. “You can supervise the whole time. I

promise we'll drag Kacchan out if anything goes wrong!"

"Oi!" Kacchan scowled. "You're not dragging me anywhere, nerd."

The doctor hesitated for a moment before sighing, "Honestly, I don't think there's anything you boys can do."

He led them to one of the rooms and opened the door. Izuku gasped softly as he recognized the man strapped to the bed. He'd fought him a few times, but seeing him like this...Alright, he may have told the doctor they'd leave if things went wrong, but Izuku knew he wouldn't be able to leave until they'd saved him, so he'd just have to make sure nothing went wrong! Simple enough, right?

"It's been getting worse." the doctor explained. "We've had to restrain him for his own safety, as well as our staff's."

Kacchan went right up to the bed and kicked it, "Oi! Tentacle Freak! Wake up!"

Ogawa startled awake and he looked disoriented for a moment before he caught sight of Kacchan and the confusion cleared, "Oh, it's just you. Did you really miss me so much that you had to come in the middle of the night? And you brought more friends!"

Kacchan rolled his eyes. "These idiots are here to save you, dumbass."

Ogawa smiled sadly, "I'm not sure that's possible, man. It's alright, though, I'm…"

"Actually, it might be." Izuku interrupted. He had to force himself not to freeze when everyone turned to look at him. "Um, well, I mean, we can't save you from what's already happened, but, um, it's a brainwashing quirk causing the problem, right?"

Ogawa sighed and slumped against the bed, "At least one. I don't remember everything they did to me, they made sure of that, but I know they tried using quirks to make me more compliant"

Izuku nodded, "I assumed as much. The Nomu from the USJ was made by the same people and from what Kcchan said, he was completely obedient. I'm not sure...you've already done brain scans, right? He's not showing any signs of mental deterioration, is he?"

The doctor shook his head and looked at Izuku suspiciously, "No...how do you even know about that risk?"

“I’m...a consultant on the case? Kinda?” Izuku said hesitantly. He wasn’t in vigilante gear right now, and even if the hood mostly protected his face from the security cameras, it still probably wasn’t the best idea to just admit that he was a vigilante. “I’ve done a lot of research about quirk theory and quirk transfer and since most people don’t actually think it’s possible, there’s not really experts on it, so...I guess I’m kinda the next best thing?”

The doctor gave him a look, “You pushed your way into the case just like Bakugo here did, didn't you?”

Bakugo laughed. “Way to call him out, doc! You know that Eraser would make you an official consultant in a heartbeat if you asked, right?”

“You don’t know that.” Izuku answered out of habit. “But, um, it’s good that there’s not any damage, I mean, obviously, but it’ll make it easier to predict and track quirk behavior without the extra complications. So, uh...basically they can remotely take control of you, right?”

Ogawa nodded, “That’s how it looks right now, yeah. What are you thinking?”

Izuku smiled, “I’m thinking that even if we can’t completely undo the brainwashing, there’s a good chance that we’ll be able to cancel out its effects. Shinso, would you be able to take control of him?”

“Wait, I’m confused.” Ogawa interrupted. “Who’s taking control of me?”

“That would be me.” Shinso said. “Are you ok with that?”

Izuku held his breath as Ogawa turned to Kacchan, then nodded, “Yes. If Bakugo brought you here, then I…”

He went blank and Bakugo grabbed the doctor’s arm when he moved to interfere, “This isn’t one of the villains, doc. You got him, Eyebags?”

“Yeah…” Shinso said. “But for someone who agreed to being brainwashed, he’s fighting a lot more than I’m used to.”

“Oi! Dumbass!” Kacchan yelled. “Stop fighting! He’s trying to help you, you idiot!”

“I don’t think he is.” Izuku muttered. “Um, excuse me? I know you’re trying to help him, and we really appreciate all you’re doing to protect him, but we’re trying to save him to, so can you please stop fighting?”

“Um…who are you talking to?” Shinso asked. “He’s not gonna be able to respond like this.”

“Oh, I know.” Izuku answered. “But your quirk is currently affecting Ogawa, not the past holders of his quirks.”

“That makes sense.” The doctor nodded. “We think they’re what’s been knocking him out of the villain factory’s control so far.”

Izuku turned back to Ogawa who was just staring blankly into space, and addressed the vestiges, “Shinso has a quirk really similar to the ones puting Ogawa in danger, so it’s understandable that you want to fight to free him, but the first step to actually doing that is to put him under Shinso’s control so he can try to hijack the commands, ok?”

They waited a long minute until Shinso sighed in relief, “Ok, they’ve stopped. What now?”

Izuku smiled, somehow excited despite the high stakes, “Now we fight for him!”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: 05.28.2021

Brainwash

Chapter Summary

If two brainwashers fight, does it count as a battle of the wits?

Chapter Notes

Art!
The Midgty
Viridenki:TroubleMagnet
Ogawaisnowmyhusband
Michealwithabee
Claire;P

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki didn't know how Izuku could still say he wasn't cut out to be a hero, considering that here they were in what basically amounted to a life or death situation and the dumbass was *excited* . He seemed conflicted over that fact, but Katsuki couldn't even be angry about it, because he knew how the nerd got about quirks. Even when they were in preschool and still almost friends, everytime Izuku saw a new quirk, it was like he'd been let loose in the candy store, and he wouldn't stop buzzing until he'd learned everything he could and figured out how it worked. It used to annoy him to no end, but now he knew better.

That excitement saved lives.

"So, how do we do this?" Katsuki asked. "Do we just have Shinso order him to snap out of it or something?"

"That's a good start." Izuku hummed. "But I doubt it'll be that simple. How in depth is your connection, Shinso? Like, can you feel the influence of the other brainwashers?"

"I think you're forgetting that this is completely uncharted territory for me." Shinso responded. "I wouldn't even know where to begin. It's not like brainwashing is a team sport or anything."

"Oh, that makes sense." Izuku nodded. "But Kacchan makes a good point. Let's start by ordering him to break out of the villain factory's

control. Can you do that, Shinso?"

"Sure." Eyebags shrugged. "Break out of any brainwashing except for mine."

The room was suddenly filled with beeping and alarms as the machines monitoring Ogawa's vitals and brain activity went crazy and Katsuki felt his stomach drop, "Stop! Make him stop!"

Shinso's eyes widened and he almost tripped over his words as he hurried to reverse the order, "S-Nevermind, stop. Ignore the last order!"

The room went quiet again as the readings went back to normal and Izuku let out a slow breath, "Ok, well that's not gonna work."

"Obviously, dumbass." Katsuki complained. "I'd prefer if you could find a way to break the brainwashing *without* killing him, thanks."

"It's difficult when that might be a failsafe…" Izuku muttered. "I wonder if...but maybe…? Does it work like that?"

"Just spit it out dumbass!" Katsuki snapped, wincing when Izuku flinched. "Ugh, sorry, I mean…"

"Don't apologize! You're anxious, it's fine!" Izuku assured frantically. "I was just thinking that if we knew what orders he was given, Shinso might be able to give an order directly opposing it so the two would cancel eachother out.!"

"I can't order him to respond verbally." Shinso reminded him. "I can really only control actions. So unless you have some other way of figuring it out…"

"Well, then, just, like, order him not to kill himself!" Katsuki tugged at his hair. "That's the major problem right now, isn't it?"

Izuku frowned, "It's the most urgent, but not the root, so while we can start there, it's not really a good idea to leave it at that…"

Suddenly, Shinso hissed and grabbed at his head, collapsing to his knees. Katsuki and Izuku were at his side within a moment, but he didn't even seem to be aware of them as he breathed through whatever the fuck had just happened. Katsuki growled in frustration. He didn't know when the doctor had left, just that he was probably off getting more help, but there had to be a call button or something! It

was bad enough that he was inches away from losing one friend, he couldn't stand the thought of losing Shinso too.

"Shinso?" Izuku rubbed his back. "Are you ok? Did the vestiges start fighting back again?"

"Not...them." Shinso grit out. "I think I know what another brainwasher feels like now, fuck!"

"Oh." Izuku's eyes widened. "I guess that confirms the difference in your two quirks…"

"Less theory, more action." Katsuki growled. "What's going on and how do we stop it?"

"The only ways are for Shinso to either overpower the other brainwasher or release Ogawa." Izuku said. "The other brainwasher can activate their quirk remotely and they're obviously aware enough of Ogawa's brain to tell that we're messing around with it. uh...I guess it's up to you?"

"Can't..be a hero if I...give up." Shinso forced out. "Let's fight."

Izuku got a determined look in his eyes and nodded, "Alright. Our top priority is establishing you as the dominant force in his mind. Repeat after me: Give priority…"

Shinso took another deep breath, "Give priority…"

"To my orders…"

"To my orders…"

"Over anyone else's."

"Over anyone else's."

Shinso was panting now and Katsuki looked over toward the machines monitoring Ogawa's vitals. His brain activity was spiking, obviously, and his heart was racing, but he wasn't setting off any alarms like he had earlier.

"How does that feel?" Izuku asked. "Can you still feel the other brainwasher's influence?"

"Can I still feel the other brainwasher's influence?" Shinso gave a strained laugh. "Can I feel the other brainwasher's influence?! I am

literally fighting a war in someone else's brain right now!"

"Stop being such a drama queen, Eyebags, this is hero shit." Katsuki rolled his eyes. "Is it more or less."

Shinso shot him a sullen glare, "...less. I think the vesti-whatevers are helping though."

Izuku gave a quick nod, "Good, we need all the help we can get. The good news is that we've basically primed Ogawa to accept your orders, even if other orders are given. Kinda. Now we can move onto breaking the other connections. Order him to ignore any other voices in his brain. Oh! Except the vestiges! Don't forget that."

Katsuki watched in amazement as Izuku slowly coached Shinso through a battle that he couldn't even see. Izuku hadn't ever had a quirk. He'd never been in someone's brain like Shinso had been, but he'd worked and studied so hard that it was almost like he just instinctively knew the relative strengths and weaknesses of both quirks and was able to manipulate them in his favor.

That didn't mean that it was easy or that Shinso wasn't doing his fair share of the work. It was the weirdest fight Katsuki had ever seen, because even though Shinso had closed his eyes at some point and was curled up on the floor, he was sweating and obviously pushing his body, mind, and quirk to it's limits, "The other guy's still there. How much more?"

"However much it takes to save him." Izuku said gently. "You can do this, Shinso, you can save him, I know you can, just hold on a little longer, ok?"

Shinso nodded, "At least this isn't fighting robots."

Katsuki snorted, "Yeah, *that* was just embarrassing."

Shinso flipped him off without opening his eyes, but the distraction seemed to help, because he was a little more relaxed as Izuku gave the next order, "Alright, our brains naturally prune away memories and things we don't need, so the villains probably used that to their advantage. It's easier to get someone to obey if they don't remember why they should be resisting in the first place. But you know how it's easier to learn a language if you've already studied it? Even if it's been years and you don't remember any of it, it's easier to learn the second time. Nothing is ever truly erased."

“So you want him to order Ogawa to remember everything he’s forgotten?” Katsuki asked.

“No.” Izuku frowned. “That’d be too overwhelming. Maybe…”

“Remember anything your captors ordered you to forget.” Shinso ordered.

“Oh!” Izuku smiled. “That’s perfect! Good work!”

Shinso gave a small smirk, “I think I’m getting hte hang of it. I can still feel the other guy, but it’s like…I dunno how to describe it. It’s like they’re clumsy with their quirk or something.”

“That would make sense.” Izuku mused. “If it’s All for One, he doesn’t have time to master every quirk he steals, and even if he gave it to someone else, they weren’t born with it. You’ve had years to master your quirk. It’s hard to beat that. Keep going. We’re almost there.”

“I have an idea, but it’s risky.” Shinso said. “Their control is a lot weaker than before, though, so I think it’ll work.”

Izuku and Katsuki shared a look and Katsuki nodded, “Go for it.”

Shinso took a deep breath, “Without hurting yourself, break out of anyone’s brainwashing except mine.”

Katsuki could tell that the other guy was fighting back just from the way that Shinso’s entire body tensed up and the way his eyes screwed up in concentration as he fought to maintain control, but even though Ogawa’s brain activity spiked, he didn’t enter any danger zones like he had before.

“Keep going, dumbass.” Katsuki encouraged softly. “You can do this, just fight those bastards off. You can do it.”

One moment, they were looking at the monitors and expecting to have to reverse the order, then next, it was as if something had snapped. All of Ogawa’s vitals went back to normal and his brain activity went back to below normal levels, just like they’d expect from someone being brainwashed. Katsuki looked at his face. He even *looked* calmer.

Shinso heaved a sigh of relief, “I did it. They’re gone.”

Izuku grinned, “That was amazing, Shinso! You’re going to make an amazing hero!”

Katsuki still felt like he was waiting for the other shoe to drop, “What now?”

“Now you let go of your control as gently as possible.” Izuku said. “He was fighting too, so he’ll probably be tired...is someone coming?”

Katuski frowned, “Maybe the doctor. I can check.”

He pushed open the door and his eyes widened as he saw the doctor leading Aizawa and Tsukauchi down the hall. Oh shit. Of course that’s where the doctor had gone. Three kids show up in the middle of the night and start messing with a patient’s brain, of course they’re gonna call the heroes! Aizwa caught sight of him and started walking faster, but Katsuki slammed the door shut, “Why doesn’t this stupid door have a lock?”

“Because it’s a hospital, Kacchan. The doctors need to be able to get in.” Izuku said. “It’s not just the doctor, is it?”

“Nope.” Katsuki said. “You still not ready to get caught?”

“I can’t be a hero, Kacchan, you know that.” Izuku patted Shinso’s shoulder and stood, looking up. “Good thing this is a drop ceiling. I saw an empty room a few doors down. See you later, Kacchan.”

Izuku didn’t even hesitate as he pulled himself up and into the ceiling, moving the tile back into place right as the door opened, “Katsuki Bakugo, what in the world are you doing?”

“Saving someone.” Katsuki growled, loud enough to hopefully cover any lingering noise of Izuku’s escape. “And hey, it worked.”

“Shut up.” Shinso groaned. “Do you *have* to be so loud when I just gave myself a migraine trying to save your stupid friend?”

“Hey, I’m not stupid.” Ogawa piped up. “And thank you, but I’m gonna sleep for a million years, thanks.”

Aizawa frowned, “Who’s this?”

Katsuki smirked, “This is Shinso, general studies, but not for long, considering that he’s who we have to thank for breaking the villain factory’s control over this idiot. Shinso, this is ERaserhead.”

Shinso’s eyes shot open and he rushed to stand, only to start swaying as soon as he got to his feet, “Oh my god. I finally meet Eraserhead

and I can't even....Bakugo, I am going to murder you."

"Get in line." Katsuki said. "I already attract serial killers like flies, what's one more?"

The doctor looked around the room and frowned, "I thought there were three of you."

"There was." Ogawa confirmed. "Crazy awesome quirk analyst. It was kinda cool for how young he was."

Aizawa looked at him suspiciously, "Kacchan…"

Katsuki stared him dead in the eye, "I have no idea what you're talking about."

"I don't know why you didn't tell him it was *Eraserhead* coming." Shinso said. "I mean, he's a fan, so he probably would have loved to meet him."

"A fan?" Aizawa didn't let Katsuki say anything as he turned to Shinso. "Why would you say that?"

"He was wearing custom merch." Shinso let his eyes slide shut again. "Some hoodie that said *If lost return to Eraserhead."*

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: June 04, 2021

Identity

Chapter Summary

Nothing stays hidden forever.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Mae X
Markus Westphal
help brain is broke
That's so Yikes
The biggest fangirl
Potatoaddict
athnyte X
Nabringa
Hattie
Nabringa X X X
Ogawa is now my husband
Blu
screamign
A true Gentlebee
The Midgety

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

More Memes at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“So I hear you’ve been annoying Eraserhead lately. Well, more so than usual.” Dabi took a sip of his drink. “He really gave you detention?”

Katsuki shrugged, “I needed to cross it off my bucket list eventually. I mean, I would have lived in detention in middle school ifthose poor excuses for teachers actually did their fucking jobs.”

“Hmm.” Dabi gave a small smile. “So what did you do this time?”

“I broke into a hospital and might have helped a vigilante escape.” Katsuki answered. “So you know, a normal tuesday.”

Dabi whistled, “Yeah, that would do it. I’m guessing he still hasn’t

forgiven you?"

"Nah, but he's got the sports festival to worry about, so he hasn't had time to do much more than brood about it." Katsuki said. "I'm still deciding whether I want to win or not."

"Careful, Kacchan." Dabi warned. "That ego might come back to bite you."

"Fine, whether I want to *try* to win." Katsuki rolled his eyes. "I'm going to be an underground hero, so it might be best to keep to the shadows and let the spotlight heroes steal the show."

"Hmm, that makes sense." Dabi said. "You could always take a sidekick role. Pick one of the popular kids and stick with them through the whole thing. The people who know what they're looking for'll see your talent, everybody else'll dismiss you as a non-entity. You get to show off and keep your cryptid status at the same time."

"Hmm. I guess it's true that nobody pays attention to the sidekick, isn't it?" " Katsuki tapped his fingers against the bar, "what about your plans for the sports festival, huh? You planning on coming to support your baby brother?"

Dabi had made the mistake of taking a drink right at that moment and Katsuki smirked as he choked and spat it all over himself. Even Dabi grabbing him by the collar and dragging him out into the alley couldn't completely wipe the smile off his face.

Dabi snarled and slammed him against the wall, "How the hell do you know that?"

"I think you're forgetting that I'm an informant, Dabi. It wasn't too hard to connect the dots." Katsuki rolled his eyes and shoved dabi's hand away, "And if you're trying to intimidate me by making yourself run hotter like that, I should remind you that I have better natural fire resistance than you do, *Touya."*

"That won't matter at incineration temperatures." Dabi hissed. "Who have you told?"

"If I'd told anyone, dumass, Icyhot would have shown up on your doorstep weeks ago." Katsuki said. "And I don't really get why it's such a big secret. It's not like your old man is gonna come back from the dead and make a stink about you faking your own death or anything. At least drop by and say hi to your siblings."

“Shut up.” Dabi snarled. “You don’t know anything.”

Katsuki raised one eyebrow, “I know those three have spent the last ten years thinking they’d never see you again and from where I’m standing, that’s kinda a dick move. I get keeping your distance while the old man was still alive, but you should have at least reached out after the funeral.”

“You don’t know what it was like.” Dabi glared at him. “Endeavor *made* Shouto. He was the favorite. The rest of us were nothing to him but useless failures that were only good for getting in the way of his *masterpiece.”*

Katsuki was quiet for a long moment, “That’s not an excuse.”

“Listen here, *Kacchan…”* Dabi growled.

“No. *You* listen.” Katsuki interrupted sternly. “You don’t think I know what it was like? I *was* the masterpiece. I’ve spent my entire life thinking I was better than everyone else just because I had a bomb quirk. Everybody else was just extras on my path to greatness and I treated them like shit, especially my best friend, but you know what? We started talking again and we’re moving past it. Yeah, it definitely still sucks, but we’ve both changed since then, so do you really think we should miss out on that relationship just because of something that happened when we were kids? If I still want Izuku in my life, then I’m absolutely certain that Todoroki still wants you in his.”

Dabi didn’t look *happy* , but he also wasn’t making any moves to kill him, so Katsuki was gonna count that as a win. After a long moment Dabi huffed and ran a hand through his hair, “What makes you think I want him in mine?”

“Meh, it’s not like you have any other friends.” Katsuki grinned and ducked the half-hearted stream of fire that Dabi sent his way. “So? You gonna show up?”

“I’ll…” Dabi hesitated. “I’ll consider it. You won’t tell him?”

Katsuki looked at him in disgust, “I don’t wanna get involved in your stupid family drama, are you stupid?”

Dabi glared at him, “You just…”

“I gotta go find myself a hero to sidekick for.” Katsuki gave him a short wave and started walking away, “See ya later, scarface!”

Denki was kinda freaking out. Aizawa had given him and Bakugo the option of doing the welcome speech together, but Bakugo had done the same thing as he'd done with the class president issue and shoved the responsibility onto Denki. It also didn't help that everyone was acting so high strung about the whole festival.

For example, Inasa walking straight up to Todoroki and, without any preamble, saying, "I hated you the first time we met."

"Whoa, Inasa, dude!" Sero chuckled awkwardly. "You can't just say things like that!"

"I see no problem with it." Todoroki said calmly. "Why did you hate me? And, if I understand you correctly, why don't you hate me now?"

Inasa grinned, "You see, that's what I like about you. Willing to roll with the punches! It's a quiet kind of passion, but it's better than nothing!"

"Thank you." Todoroki nodded. "But you still haven't answered my question."

"Well…" Inasa grimaged and rubbed the back of his neck. "When we first met at the recommendation exam, I was kinda comparing you to your dad…"

Todorki's expression turned even more stony, "Ah. Nevermind. I do have a problem."

"No, I mean, I get that I was wrong!" Inasa insisted. "I'd met your dad once, and he was an asshole, obviously. But then at the exam, I saw this burning hatred in your eyes and I thought that hate was directed at the whole world, just like his was. I, uh, I actually ended up rejecting my recommendation acceptance and was planning to go to Shiketsu, even though UA was my dream, when everything finally came out and I realized how wrong I was. That's why I had to take the normal entrance exam just like everyone else."

Todoroki raised an eyebrow at him, "Is this supposed to be an apology?"

"Kinda, yeah!" Inasa laughed. "But it's also a declaration of war. You're a powerful hero in your own right, Todoroki, probably way stronger than your dad was, but that quiet passion you've got isn't gonna be enough. I'm gonna beat you and win this thing!"

Todoroki was silent for a moment, “You can try.”

Denki gulped. How was he supposed to compete when everyone was legit declaring war? He didn’t want to disappoint All Might or the vestiges or Izuku by losing, but what made him think he even stood a chance? He was just a dumb…

He shook his head. No. he wasn’t dumb. Izuku had said that enough times now that it was actually starting to wear down at the massive mental wall he’d built from all the times he’d been called stupid in the past. He just had to trust that his kinda-boyfriend was smart enough to know what he was talking about.

Denki felt his phone buzz in his pocket and grinned when he saw it was actually Izuku, almost as if he knew exactly how much Denki needed him at that moment. Actually, with how well Izuku knew him, he probably *did* know. He was so lucky that some grumpy uncle had challenged Izuku to go make some friends. He didn’t know where he’d be without him.

Denki picked up the phone and huddled in the corner for some semblance of privacy, “Hey babe. How are you?”

“I’m fine, just sitting on the couch and watching all the opening commercials with Mom!” Izuku’s voice washed over him like a calming blanket. “What about you? How are you holding up?”

“Izuku, I don’t think I’ve ever been this nervous.” Denki confessed. “And that includes… *ofa*… you know? Everyone’s so strong! I’m kinda freaking out.”

“You’ve got this.” Izuku encouraged. “And I know you said All Might wants you to win and make this your debut, but you don’t have to win to show the world what you’re capable of! And even if you somehow completely bomb this and get eliminated in the first round, then that’s just an excuse for us to get ice cream and cuddle on the couch, right?”

Denki chuckled, “Is that a promise?”

“Yeah.” Izuku sounded like he was smiling. “Are you gonna be ok?”

Denki took a deep breath and nodded, “I’ll do my best.”

“Good!” Izuku said. “I’m proud of you!”

Denki smiled brightly as he hung up, and a tingle up his spine the

only reason that he was able to keep Mina from stealing his phone, "Who was that?"

"Who?" Denki said uselessly. "No one! What are you even talking about? There's no one, this is nothing. Nothing at all!"

"Hmm, you're acting kinda sus dude." Sero pointed out. "So? Not just anyone can make you smile like that, so it was a cute girl, right?"

"Oh! A cute girl!" Mineta instantly butt into the conversation. "What's she look like? Does she have huge…"

Kirishima cuffed Mineta upside the head, "It can be a boy too. We're not gonna judge."

"Come on, guys." Denki chuckled awkwardly. "We've been on, like, one date. It's nothing!"

He saw Bakugo give him an odd look, but he was distracted by how loudly Mina gasped, "What?! You've been holding out on us Pikachu! So? What's their name?"

"Come on, you idiots." Bakugo growled. "It's time to fight, not gossip. The other classes are already lining up."

"But Kacchan!" Mina whined.

"Later." Bakugo rolled his eyes and turned to Uraraka. "You coming, Cheeks?"

"Yeah!" Uraraka finished tying her shoes and an air of determination surrounded her. "Come on, guys! Let's show them what we're made of!"

Izuku's cheeks were hurting from how much he was grinning and Mom was sitting beside him with a knowing smile as they watched Denki climb the podium. He looked so good in his gym uniform and Izuku couldn't wait until everyone got to see him all lit up in electricity. He was gonna do amazing!

"Um…hey everybody!" Denki waved and gave the audience a lopsided grin that Izuku knew would make the marketing teams go crazy. "This is our first sports festival and I've heard, like, three declarations of war just this morning, so welcome to UA, I guess! This is gonna be super intense, so I hope everyone's ready, because we are. Plus ultra!"

Izuku couldn't help joining in the cheer and the following applause, even if he wasn't actually *there.* He had a handful of different notebooks beside him at the ready to fully analyze everyone's quirks and the matchups he saw and he'd been so excited that he'd almost slipped up and rambled about civilian stuff to Eraserhead. This was gonna be so cool!

"An obstacle course?" Mom frowned. "Like running around tires or something like that?"

Izuku shook his head, "UA isn't gonna put anything that simple. Look at the setup. You can already see the first obstacle?"

"Really?" Mom squinted her eyes. "Where?"

Izuku grinned, "It's a bottleneck. Everyone is gonna try and get through the door at the same time, but…"

"Oh!" Mom's eyes widened. "Oh my, that really favors the kids that can fly, doesn't it?"

Izuku nodded, "Yeah, so Kacchan isn't gonna have any issues. Neither will Denki, if he's willing to think outside the box, but he's good at that, so I'm not worried."

Midnight gave the signal to begin and just as Izuku thought, everyone pushed against each other and fought to get through the too-small door. He'd been expecting Kacchan to take the lead first off, but a kid with an ice quirk froze everyone else and skated ahead. Denki had been at the back of the pack, but he managed to use his magnetism to pull himself to the top of the doorway, which meant that his only problem after that was just getting down.

"What's this?!" Present Mic's commentary made Izuku look at the mass of students a little closer. "Well folks, it looks like we already have a team-up! Bakugo and Uraraka from 1A steal the lead from Todoroki!"

"Their quirks are both very effective for mobility, especially when combined." Eraserhead sounded so tired, even while praising his students and it made Izuku giggle. "Bakugo might look like he's doing all the work at the moment, but Uraraka's quirk allows them to move twice as fast. Similarly, a lack of gravity wouldn't do her much good without Bakugo providing forward momentum."

"Top key analysis, Eraser!" Mic yelled. "But is that gonna do them any

good against the *Robo Inferno?!"*

Izuku gasped. Denki had described UA's robots to him, but seeing them was something else, especially the zero pointer. Denki had taken down one of those?! And before he'd even gotten One for All?! No wonder All Might had been impressed, he was so cool!

Todoroki froze a few of them, off balance, and Mom gasped as the robots crushed a few of the students, only for them to burst from the metal seconds later. Izuku grabbed one of his notebooks. Invulnerability quirks were common and considered relatively boring, but they were so useful in hero work. And having two in the hero course during the same year could lead to some interesting team-ups, not to mention how the metal one could interact with Denki's quirk.

The students made quick work of the robots, but Izuku froze as something caught his eye. One of the smaller robots had been electrocuted, but it was after Denki had already passed. Izuku's first thought was that it might be that support student with all the crazy gear that he'd seen in the crowd, but she was on the other side fighting a three pointer. It wasn't until the camera did a close up and he saw the black dots silhouetted against the mist from Todoroki's ice that he dropped his pencil.

"Bees." Izuku breathed. "She's using a student."

"Hmm?" Mom tore her eyes away from the screen. "What was that sweetie?"

"Nothing." Izuku said quickly. "I, uh, I need to check something. I'll be in my room, let me know if anything happens."

He didn't wait for Mom to nod before he ran to his room and opened a stream of the sports festival so he could watch that close-up again. He'd been hoping it was a trick of the light, but he knew how Queen Bee's swarm behaved and this...this was bad. If her host was a UA student, that meant that she could hurt the students at any time. It was probably how they'd gotten the info to attack the USJ as well. He needed to figure out who she was possessing.

He watched the dots carefully, hardly even noticing what the other obstacles were. It was hard when the bees didn't seem to be helping anyone in particular, they mostly seemed to be gathering data on the students, which was its own particular brand of terrifying. They were swarming so wildly that Izuku couldn't even really tell how many there were.

Then he saw one of them disappear.

Izuku rubbed his eyes and rewound the footage. That had to have been a weird trick of the light, because the bees could do a lot of weird stuff, but they couldn't turn invisible. At least, not on their own. On a second rewatch, however, the bee still disappeared and now that he was looking for it, Izuku realized that the reason he hadn't been able to get an accurate count of them was because the bees kept disappearing and reappearing.

"But how…?" Izuku took a closer look at the space where the bees kept disappearing and suddenly he felt like he couldn't breathe, because beneath the bee's *hive* was an empty uniform. "An invisible girl."

Izuku didn't even take the time to think, he grabbed an old backpack and shoved his vigilante hoodie inside alongside his laptop, toolbelt and a few extra marbles, "Mom, I gotta do something! I'll be back later!"

Mom looked at him like he was crazy as he tore through the living room, "But, baby, the sports festival…"

"Record it." Izuku scrambled to put on his shoes. "I can't afford to mess this up again."

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X

Cavalry

Chapter Summary

The cavalry battle.

Also, no, you don't have the date wrong, this chapter is just early.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Bakeneko
That's so Yikes
Shrimp
Mayday X
Caws X X X

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

More Memes at the End!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“I need Eraser’s number!”

Katsuki ran a hand through his hair and shook his head in response to Uraraka’s questioning glance as he held the phone to his ear, “Izuku, the second round is starting at literally any moment. Can’t you get it yourself?”

“If I was still at home, I would.” Izuku said. “But the wifi on the train is terrible and I need to stay on the move! He’s your homeroom teacher, so you have his number for emergencies and stuff, right?”

“Yeah, I do, but…” He started, but Uraraka nudged him and he looked toward the stage to see Midnight already climbing the podium. “Shit, fine! I’ll text it to you!”

“Thanks Kacchan! I…”

Katsuki hung up and shoved the phone in his pocket just as Midnight started talking, “Hello students! Are you ready for your next round of torture?”

Katsuki forced himself to pay attention. Sure, the nerd calling and demanding Eraserhead's number with zero explanation was super suspicious, but he didn't have the time to worry about that right now. He and Cheeks had another round to win.

"We've seen how capable you are of overcoming obstacles, but can you play well with others?" Midnight asked dramatically. "This next round is all about teamwork! If you don't have chemistry with your teammates in the cavalry battle, you'll be screwed!"

Midnight went over the rules and everything seemed pretty self explanatory. Teams of two to four, rider couldn't touch the ground, don't knock anybody over on purpose, steal all the points. Easy as pie! Except for then she explained the point values.

"And of course," Midnight grinned, "The ones at the top will suffer the most! First place winner of the obstacle course will be worth a whopping 10 million points!"

Katsuki heard a small squeak beside him and turned to see Uraraka looking more nauseous than usual. In hindsight, maybe he should have waited for Icyhot to pass before shoving Cheeks over the finish line, but oh well. Live and learn.

"Oi, Cheeks, calm down." Katsuki grabbed her shoulders. "You're gonna be just fine, alright? You're gonna make these guys regret underestimating you, alright?"

Uraraka took a deep breath and her eyes filled with enough determination to make Katsuki grin, "Yeah, I can do this! Plus Ultra!"

"Plus Ultra, bitch." Katsuki looked around, "Now which of these extras do we want on our team? Oh, yeah, definitely him."

He stalked off, shooting off a quick text to Izuku with Eraserhead's number as Uraraka followed behind him until they reached a group of blank-eyed hero students, "Oi! Eyebags! Let go of those dummies. You're with us!"

Shinso raised an eyebrow at him, "Why would I do that? Your girlfriend over there has a target on her back a mile wide."

Katsuki grinned, "That just means that it'll be even more impressive when we win. Plus, you're going underground, right? Being the rider'll draw way too much attention. But if we help her win…"

“Hey!” Uraraka put her hands on her hips. “I don’t need your help!”

“Of course not, Cheeks,” Katsuki said patiently, “But helping you win gives the two of us a discreet chance to shine. It’s mutually beneficial.”

Shinso hummed, “So what you’re suggesting is that we let the spotlight hero take all the attention while we hide in her shadow, does that sound about right?”

Katsuki shrugged, “Pretty much. So? You in?”

Shinso sighed, “I don’t actually have a choice, do I?”

“Nope!” Katsuki smirked and shoved monkey boy to knock him out of Shinso’s quirk. “Now, come on, let’s go get our rider.”

Uraraka jogged after him, “I thought *I* was gonna be the rider.”

“You will be.” Katsuki said. “No one said we couldn’t have two.”

“So what?” Shinso asked. “We just each put one on our shoulders and hold hands or something?”

“Nah, you don’t actually want him touching you.” Katsuki narrowed his eyes and searched until he saw who he was looking for, “Oi! Dunce Face! Get over here!”

“The kids are doing pretty well.” Mic remarked. “That gen-ed student you told me about is pretty impressive. He got onto the second round.”

“Good. Now we don’t have to come up with an excuse for his transfer.” Shouta said. “He’s got a real world save under his belt, so I already started the paperwork with Nedzu, but he insisted we wait until after the sports festival to make it official.”

Mic played with the sleeve of his jacket, “Do you really think he’ll be able to save Shirakumo?”

Shouta sighed, “With enough training, yes. It’s part of why I want him in the hero course. The villain factory’s hold on Shirakumo is tighter than it was on Ogawa, so there’s no guarantee, but if Shinso can keep strengthening his quirk, he might just be able to pull it off.”

“He also works well with Bakugo.” Mic pointed out. “They’ll be one

hell of an underground duo if they decide to team up. We need more underground heroes."

"We do." Shouta agreed. "Now if only we can convince Viridian to get a license, they can be a trio...what the hell are those problem children doing now?"

Hitoshi focused on keeping a straight face as Cementoss stared at their team like he was reevaluating all of his life decisions. Midnight just looked like she was about to laugh as her eyes moved back and forth between where he and Bakugo were standing stone-faced on the ground with Uraraka on their shoulders and Kaminari, who was floating 15 feet above them in the air. They had managed to find an extension cord in one of the closets backstage and tied one end around Kaminari's waist, while the other was insulated and currently tied around Uraraka's wrist. It almost looked like she was a little kid getting a piggyback ride and trying not to lose a very special balloon after a long day at an amusement park.

"Well, that's definitely some creative thinking on the part of team Uraraka...or would that be team Kaminari?" Present Mic asked. "Well, either way, let's ask the biggest question on everyone's mind right now. Is that even allowed?!"

"Why the fuck wouldn't it be?" Bakugo argued calmly. "Octopus over there has two riders. If he can have both the grape and the frog, we get Pickachu and Gravity girl."

Midnight lost her battle with laughter and giggled, "As long as he never touches the ground, normal rules for riders apply. It's ok!"

Bakugo scoffed, "Told you it'd be fine."

Uraraka gave a breathy sigh of relief, "I seriously thought we were gonna get disqualified or something. Kaminari! You still good up there?"

Kaminari grinned and gave them a thumbs up. Hitoshi let the corner of his mouth twitch up into a tiny smile. He'd heard Bakugo's strategy and Kaminari and Uraraka had both added their own two cents, so it looked like they might actually have a chance, but even if they didn't manage to hold onto the 10 million points, they could always steal more.

"So if Kaminari has the headband, who has the ability to get it from

him?" Hitoshi asked. "Are there any hero students that have flight quirks?"

"No one can fly, but we tend to get creative." Bakugo grinned. "Besides me, Cheeks, and Pikachu up there, our biggest threat is going to be Tornado over there."

"He means Inasa." Uraraka translated. "He has a wind manipulation quirk, so he can easily blow himself up there or blow Kaminari down."

"So we go straight for his team first and get him under my control." Hitoshi stared toward Inasa's team in determination. "Assuming, of course, that he doesn't ruin all our plans before then."

"Is everybody ready?!" Midnight did a final sweep of her whip and cracked it sharply. "Go!"

The winds around them picked up as every single other team made a beeline for them. Instead of running away, however, their team pushed forward and Hitoshi yelled to be heard above the wind, "Hey tornado kid! What makes you think you even have a chance at winning this?"

Inasa laughed and took the bait, "With enough passion, anything…"

Hitoshi smirked as Inasa's face went slack. He recognized the other members of his team as Bakugo's other friends that he'd met at the hospital, which meant that even if they didn't know exactly how his quirk worked, they still knew Hitoshi was responsible and it was only a matter of time before they figured out how to wake him up, "How chaotic should I make this fight?"

"Go for more, rather than less." Uraraka suggested. "If people are distracted, they're less likely to figure out a way to get our headband."

"That's what I was thinking." Hitoshi turned back toward Inasa. "With the exception of ours and yours, blow everyone else's headbands into the air."

Bakugo laughed and they ran away as almost everyone's headbands were literally blown off their heads and started blowing away, "Good thinking, eyebags! Wind boy will be too busy defending his headband to worry about us and the rest of those extras are playing 52 card pickup!"

"Not everyone." Uraraka pointed out. "A couple 1B kids managed to

keep theirs and Mineta was protected from the wind by Shoji's arms."

"Same thing applies though." Hitoshi said. "If they kept their headbands, they'll have to defend them. If they didn't, they have to either chase it down or steal one from someone else. For us, it's a win win."

"Whoa!" Kaminari yelled and they looked up. "Uh, guys? When did Todoroki get a jetpack?!"

Shouta glared at his phone as it rang for the third time. The first call could have been a telemarketer, but three calls in a row from the same unknown number? Either there was an emergency or the telemarketers were getting more persistent. And it had to be one hell of an emergency if they were calling him in the middle of the sports festival

After another moment, Shouta muted his mic and picked up, "What do you want?"

"Shou!" Mic squawked. "That's not how you're supposed to answer the phone!"

Shouta rolled his eyes at him, then almost dropped his phone as he heard viridian's voice, "Eraser?! Thank god, I almost thought Kacchan had given me the wrong number!"

Mic gave him a concerned look as he ran out into the hall, but Shouta couldn't be bothered to care, "No! No, he gave you the right one. What's going on? Are you ok?"

"Yeah, I'm fine." Viridian panted. "But i need you to get me into the stadium."

"You mean the one where we're holding the sports festival?" Shouta groaned. "Problem child, we have increased security to keep villains and vigilantes out. That includes you, kid."

"I know, but it's an emergency!" Viridian whined. "One of your students is Queen Bee's current host and this might be our only chance to save her!"

Shouta blinked, "Use the service entrance on the east side. I'll grab Nedzu and meet you in prep room 3."

Ochako kept a firm grip on the extension cord and swung Kaminari away from Todoroki as best she could, grateful that he also seemed to be using his magnetism to maneuver himself as well. That left Bakugo and Shinso to fight off the rest of team Todoroki.

“Get your head out of the clouds, Dunce Face!” Bakugo screamed. “Fry the stupid jetpack!”

“I’m trying!” Kaminari yelled back. “I don’t have explosions to guide my momentum like you do, Kacchan!”

“Don’t you dare touch my babies!” The support student warned them. “If you break them…”

“Babies?” Shinso asked. “Do you really have children already?”

“My inventions!” Her eyes lit up briefly before going blank.

“Good work, Eyebags.” Bakugo smirked. “Now let’s see what those babies can do.”

“What did you do to Hatsumei?” Iida demanded. “Why would you…?”

“Hand over the hover boots.” Shinso ordered. “Those should help Kaminari maneuver, right?”

“Yeah.” Ochako yanked on the cord, allowing an ice attack to fly straight over Kaminari’s head. “Pikachu! I’m bringing you down!”

Kaminari glanced toward Todoroki, “Please hurry!”

“What are you thinking?” Yaoyorozu shook Hatsumei’s shoulder and Shinso lunged forward, grabbing the boots from her hands before she could reorient herself and shoving them into Kaminari’s hands as soon as he got close enough.

“Use those to take out Icyhot!” He ordered. “Hurry!”

Ochako *meant* to let him up slowly, she really did, but then Yaoyorozu started attacking her with a quarterstaff and she had to let go to defend herself, so he just went rocketing upwards. He didn’t lose his grip on the hoverboots though, so points to him. Ochako tried floating Yaoyorozu, but she kept making thin pieces of armor that she could simply detach whenever Ochako made contact, so she could never float her actual body.

She heard Kaminari yell in triumph and Ochako looked up, getting an

idea right as Todoroki started falling. His team took a second to realize that they probably needed to catch him and in that moment, Ochako yanked off the plastic insulating her end of the extension cord and plugged it in, for lack of a better term, Iida's arm. Kaminari was producing enough ambient electricity to stun them, but because he wasn't plugged into it, not enough was going down the cord to seriously harm them. Bakugo and Shinso scrambled backwards and Todorki made an ice slide to land at least somewhat safely, using an icebridge so that he didn't touch the ground as his team slowly recovered.

Bakugo whistled, "Wow, Cheeks, that was brutal. I mean, it worked, but I didn't expect you to go that hard."

Ochako blushed and put the plastic piece back on the cord, "We needed to get them off our backs, right?"

Shinso shook his head, "Remind me never to mess with you."

Ochako grinned, "Never mess with me!"

"Noted." Shinso responded dryly. "Who else?"

"Shiozaki and Tsu are both going for the 10 million now that Icyhot's out of the way." Bakugo reported. "But with those boots, Dunce Face has that covered. Everyone else is still scrambling for the other headbands. What are you thinking?"

"I think there's less than a minute left." Shinso said.

Ochako smiled and touched both of their shoulders, "And I think our advantage is in the air! Blasty, would you be so kind as to give us liftoff."

Bakugo grinned savagely and Shinso held them together as they took to the air. They watched the rest of the mad scramble from above as the final thirty seconds ran out of the clock and Ochako reeled Kaminari in right as Midnight rang the final bell.

"Team Kaminari wins!"

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X X

Next Update: June 11, 2021

Crash

Chapter Summary

Izuku crashes the sports festival.

So about the next update being Friday? Uh, yeah...I had the day off and, well...don't get used to this.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Blackwinged_Angel
joshonboard
Mayo/Nebula

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Denki couldn't keep the grin off his face as they went to lunch. The cavalry battle had been *so much fun!* And he really couldn't wait to hear Izuku's opinion on their whole balloon strategy because it had seemed really weird at first but then it had actually worked?! He was really going to have to talk to that Hatsumei girl about making him some hover boots of his own that would be able to withstand his electricity a little better, assuming that she ever forgave him for almost trashing her old ones. They would be super convenient if he ever partnered up with Uraraka again, or even just for mobility in general. And he might want to see about adding some kind of extension cord weapon while he was at it...that sounded really lame, didn't it?

He shook his head as he got his food and turned toward the tables. He only got a few steps before Mineta practically barreled into his legs, Yaoyorozu and Jiro following along behind him, "Hey Kaminari! Bro! Tell them Aizawa said the girls have to wear the cheerleading uniform as part of the in-between games!"

"Did he?" Denki looked over at Yaoyorozu and Jiro. "Wow, I'm excited. You guys are gonna look so good in those!"

"Well, I mean if it's coming from Aizawa." Yaoyorozu frowned. "I suppose I could create some…"

“Really?” Jiro wrinkled her nose. “I don’t want to wear something so...revealing.”

“I’m sure Aizawa wouldn’t mind if you personalized them a bit.” Denki shrugged. “If Yaoyorozu’s making them, just have her make yours a little longer.”

“Kaminari!” Mineta hissed. “Don’t tell them that!”

Denki looked at him in confusion, “Why not? Dude, girls are hottest when they feel like they’re rocking the outfit, that’s like, a provable fact. If a girl doesn’t feel hot in a sexy cheerleading outfit, then it’s not really sexy, you know?”

Jiro smiled slyly, “How much personalization do you think we can pull off?”

“I don’t know…” Yaoyorozu looked insecure. “I mean, the uniforms the actual cheerleaders are wearing are probably up to some sort of regulation standard…”

“But yours are just for fun, so you can probably get away with quite a bit.” Denki pointed out. “Plus that’s probably what Aizawa had in mind anyway, because it’s a great way to show off the versatility of your quirk to all the heroes watching!”

Jiro immediately grabbed Yoyorozu’s arm and started pulling her away, “Alright, hear me out, fishnets. And then maybe raise the neck a little bit?”

Yoyorozu smiled and nodded, “I can do that...I could probably make some synthetic leather belts as well, if you’d like, if the goal is to show off versatility, it might be best to showcase different materials.”

“What about chains?”

Denki grinned as he watched them leave, and turned back to Mineta, who was staring up at him with tears in his eyes, “I’m never going to forgive you! Not ever!”

He ran away and Denki just tilted his head, “What?”

Dabi couldn’t believe he’d let Kacchan talk him into this. He was surrounded by so many heroes, all dressed up in bright coloros and showing off their perfect strong quirks and building their stupid

legacies. It was nauseating.

But while the company had been terrible, the experience hadn't been *all* bad. He got to watch Shouto compete, and lose, which was both absolutely hilarious and less satisfying than he'd expected. While it was great watching his father's perfect masterpiece come second place to Kacchan, he'd been hoping that watching the kid lose would be like watching his old man lose, which was some well deserved karma.

But Shouto wasn't Endeavor. He was his own person, something that Dabi had apparently been too angry to realize while their bastard of a dad was still alive and when he was destroying those robots or fighting that electricity kid, Dabi didn't see Endeavor. He just saw a sad, angry kid who was trying to be seen for who he was and take out a little anger on the world. He saw himself and that pissed him off.

Which was why he was currently slipping through the back tunnels of the stadium. If he stayed around those stupid shallow heroes, he was seriously goinng to torch something, so yeah, searching for someplace with a bit more peace and quiet was a good idea.

"And just where do you think you're going?"

Dabi groaned as a pair of heroes blocked his path, "Away from idiots like you? Got a problem with you?"

A big guy who he thought was called Death Arms crossed his arms, "Yes, actually, considering that these are the student preparation areas."

Dabi rolled his eyes, "Are they really?"

The other hero, a wood guy that would probably be a lot of fun to torch if Dabi ever felt like crossing the line into actual murder, stepped up behind him, "Yes, so unless you are visiting a relative, I suggest you turn around and go back..."

"I am."

The words were out before he could stop them and he cursed internally as Death Arms looked him up and down skeptically, "And who would a homeless-looking guy like you even be visiting? That brainwashing kid from gen-ed or something?"

"No." Dabi stood up to his full height, more angry now than anything else. He wasn't about to let another hero make him cower. Never

again. “I’m here to visit my little brother, Shouto Todoroki.”

It took Izuku a minute to find the door Eraserhead had said to go in, but it was already unlocked for him, which meant that Nedzu had probably already gotten involved. He didn’t know whether that was a good or a bad thing, considering that the only plan he had at the moment was a nebulous, half-baked tangle of quirk theories that he’d come up with after running out the door. All he could do was hope that would be enough.

Instead of going straight to the prep room to meet Eraserhead, not that Izuku would actually know where that was anyway, Izuku made his way toward where the students would be coming back after lunch. He’d been checking his notifications as much as possible while running here, mostly to keep an eye on Queen Bee’s host, but getting to see the pictures and memes of Denki’s team winning the Cavalry battle was a nice side effect. He’d seen that there was going to be a break before the third round, which meant that at least some of the students, including Denki, should be wandering the tunnels by this time, which mean that now, it was just a trick of finding the ones he needed while keeping out of sight of the ones he wanted to avoid.

“I didn’t think you were allowed back here.”

Izuku froze at the vaguely familiar voice and turned around slowly, grimacing as he recognized Tsuyu Asui, wearing a version of the UA cheer uniform he’d never seen before. He may have already changed into his full vigilante gear, but if his get up hadn’t fooled Kacchan, there was no way it was going to fool Tsu, not if she was anywhere near as astute as her parents seemed to be. Izuku was still about 87% sure that they knew he was the vigilante that had saved them.

He gave her an awkward smile and waved, “Uh...hi? Um, I didn’t know you were on the cheer team!”

Tsu frowned, “I’m not. A few of our classmates decided to play a prank on the girls. I’m just glad Momo made mine a one piece.”

“Well, uh…” Izuku didn’t quite know what to say, but if all the girls were wearing them, that would make the invisible girl a little easier to find. “It looks good?”

Tsu just looked at him blankly, “Do the heroes know you’re back here?”

“Some of them?” Izuku swallowed. “Well, I mean, Eraser knows and I think Nedzu does too, but I don’t want anyone else knowing! It’s, uh, kinda important that certain people don’t know I’m here, if you know what I mean.”

Tsu raised an eyebrow, “Because of your identity?”

“No.” Izuku took a deep breath and met her gaze. “Because if the wrong people get word that I’m here right now and figure out why, someone might die.”

Tsu’s eyes widened marginally, but then she nodded, “Then maybe I can help. Who are you looking for?”

Izuku’s jaw dropped and he had to shake himself out of his shock before Tsu had a chance to change her mind, “Uh, I’m looking for Denki Kaminari.”

“Seriously?” Death Arms looked him over for what felt like the millionth time and it was really starting to piss Dabi off. “ *You’re* one of Endeavor’s kids?”

“What? I don’t look like the living embodiment of Daddy issues?” Dabi grinned sharply. “When’s that tree boy coming back anyway?”

“Soon, and then we’ll see if you’re actually telling the truth.” Death Arms said. “Think your baby brother will actually recognize you?”

If Dabi was being honest, then no, there was no way Shouto would recognize him. His hair was different, not to mention the scars and the fact that they hadn’t seen each other in ten years, but a part of him really hoped the kid *would* recognize him by some miracle, just to stick it to these morons who thought they had any right to judge him and his family. It wasn’t gonna happen, but it was a fun fantasy, just like those old ones of killing his dad. He needed something to get him through the day, right?

Kamui Woods rounded the corner, “I got him.”

“Fucking finally.” Dabi muttered. “So moment of truth, right?”

Shouto came around the corner, “So you’re the one claiming to be my dead brother?”

Dabi rolled his eyes, “Oh come off your high horse, Kacchan said you

already figured out I was alive. He failed to mention you'd gotten annoying though."

Shouto gave a barely-there smile and turned to the heroes, "Yes, this is my brother Touya. Thank you for your help, but we'll be going now."

Dabi barely held back a snort at the heroes' shocked faces and flipped them off as he followed Shouto back into the tunnels. Apparently miracles did exist.

"Not that that wasn't spectacular," Dabi said after they'd turned the corner, "but how do you know it's actually me? I could just be any homeless dude pretending to be your brother for the money or something. And don't pretend like you actually recognize me, because I know you don't."

Shouto looked over at him and there was an amused twinking in his eye, "Kacchan referred to you as *scarface.* I think it's fairly obvious why."

"That asshole." Dabi growled. "I swear, I'm gonna…"

"So, why now?" Shouto asked. "Why come visit me now when you could have come by for dinner anytime. You're family, Touya. I'm sure Fuyumi still remembers your favorites."

"My favorites have changed in the past ten year, twerp." Dabi huffed. "So have I. I'm not the hero hopeful the old man raised anymore. I go by Dabi now."

Shouto looked him up and down, "It fits."

"Thanks." Dabi said dryly. "I'm so excited to have your approval."

Shouto raised an eyebrow, "You're welcome?"

Dabi turned away. This was so awkward, "So, uh, you've gotten pretty good with your ice and stuff. I bet Mom's proud."

Shouto shrugged, "I wouldn't know. I haven't really seen her since."

He gestured vaguely to his face and Dabi stopped walking, "Are you fucking kidding me? You get after me for not coming to visit, but you won't even stop by to say hi to Mom?!"

Shouto's expression turned stony, "It's different. I don't want to make

things worse for her. I still look like him."

"Yeah and I've still got his eyes, but she doesn't attack me when I go visit her." Dabi narrowed his eyes. "Wait, is that why you never used your fire in the first two rounds?"

"I'm not going to use *his* power." Shouto looked angry. "I'm going to be the best hero with only Mom's power."

"Bullshit." Dabi laughed. "You've gotta be kidding me! Endeavor is *dead,* Shouto! Villains killed him! You're really gonna let him keep holding you back like this? You're just worshipping a ghost at this point."

Shouto scowled, "I am not…"

"Then use your fucking fire." Dabi challenged, lighting his own hand up with blue flames. "That bastard's hurt us enough."

"I see why Kacchan likes you so much." Shouto grumbled. "I need to prepare for the next round. Thank you for the visit."

"Yeah, sure." Dabi said. "Hey, where are Fuyumi and Natsuo sitting? I may as well give them a heart attack while I'm here."

He ruffled Shouto's hair as his little brother practically pouted, "Why did I think having you back would be fun again?"

Dabi laughed, "No clue. Good luck in the next round, twerp. You're gonna need it."

Kaminari didn't know whether he should approach the girls and apologize for accidentally helping with Mineta's prank or if he should just keep his distance. They probably didn't even want to see him right now...or not, considering that Tsu was heading straight for him.

Denki put on what he hoped was an apologetic smile, "Hi Tsu! Uh, I'm sorry about…"

Tsu didn't even let him finish, "Come with me."

Figuring that he probably deserved whatever was coming his way, Denki followed along behind her with his head down. Tsu didn't explain anything as she led him though the labyrinth of tunnels. He was probably going to get jumped and beat up by all the girls in the class, wasn't he?

After what felt like way too many turns, Tsu stopped and turned to him, “Stay here, I’ll go get him.”

Denki felt his heart drop, “Him?! Wait, who’s him?!”

Izuku fiddled with his weapons as he huddled in the supply closet waiting for Tsu to come back. She’d recognized him, he was pretty sure of that, but for some reason, she hadn’t called him anything other than Viridian and even offered to help him. It just didn’t make sense.

There was a soft knock on the door and then it opened and Tsu gestured for him to come out, “He’s just around that corner. Let me know if you need anything else.”

Before he could stop himself, Izuku reached out and grabbed her arm, “Why are you helping me? I’m a vigilante. For all you know, I’m sneaking in.”

“You saved my parent’s lives.” Tsu held his gaze seriously. “If it wasn’t for you, me and my siblings would probably be orphans right now, so if you say you have a reason to be here, that’s enough for me. You saved my family, so I’m just helping my parents return the favor.”

Izuku swallowed thickly and let go of her arm, “Thank you.”

Tsu gave him a small smile, “Good luck.”

She walked away and Izuku took a deep breath, then turned the corner. Denki was standing, staring at the wall, but turned when he heard someone coming. When he saw Izuku, Denki’s eyes widened and his jaw dropped as he looked him over from head to toe, taking in his entire vigilante outfit in all it’s glory. He could only hope Denki would actually help him and agree to save the fight for later. They didn’t have time for a long confrontation right now, not when there were lives on the line.

Izuku braced himself for the fallout as a slow grin spread across Denki's face, “Dude, you totally lied!”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: June 11, 2021

Relationships

Chapter Summary

Meeting up with Eraserhead.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Vermillion
The Biggest Fangirl
Mintii
PJ
Avroux
MoOn

Memes at the end!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku let out a sound halfway between a sigh of relief and a huff of frustration, “Yeah, I did lie, but uh, can we talk about this later? I kinda actually need your help right now.”

Denki’s grin got even wider, “I was right!”

Izuku rolled his eyes, but for some reason couldn’t keep himself from smiling softly, “Yeah, you were. Now do you know where prep room three is? I’m supposed to be meeting Eraserhead there.”

Denki started walking, “I was right.”

Izuku just laughed and shook his head, “You’re not gonna shut up about this for weeks, are you?”

“Nope!” Denki popped the p at the end as he started walking backwards. “You are, like, totally a badass vigilante dude! You beat *Endeavor!”*

“Not really.” Izuku said shyly. “I had the help of a lot of other heroes for that one and…”

“But I bet it was your strategy that helped them win!” Denki interrupted. “Am I wrong?”

Izuku stuttered, “W-well, no, but…”

“Like I said,” Denki smiled. “Total badass. So why are you here? And why do you need my help?”

Izuku took a deep breath, “I’ll explain in a minute when we meet Eraser, but I...um, I totally understand if you hate me after this.”

Denki cocked an eyebrow, “And why would I ever hate you?”

Izuku looked at him seriously as they arrived at the prep room, “Because I’m going to ask you to kill someone.”

Shouta wasn’t quite sure what he expected to see when Viridian arrived, but his problem child dragging a confused and vaguely terrified-looking Kaminari behind him like a lost duckling was not on the list. He sighed heavily, “Viridian, why did you kidnap one of my students?”

“Because he has more control than a standard defibrillator.” Viridian said, as if that would explain everything. “Where’s Nedzu?”

The rat in question popped out of Shouta’s scarf with a grin, “So *you’re* the famous Viridian. I must say, I am excited to finally meet you. Anyone with the courage to threaten the number one hero is worth knowing in my book!”

Kaminari turned to Viridian in shock, “You threatened All Might?!”

“Only a little!” Viridian insisted. “I needed to make sure One for All was safe and that he wasn’t working with All for One before he just *gave* it to you!”

Shouta just blinked, unsurprised. He would pay good money to somehow watch a recording of that interaction, and he really wanted to be proud of the kid, but everything about this entire situation screamed that the kid was being reckless and putting himself in danger again, so he shouldn’t do anything to encourage that no matter how tempting it was, “Problem child. You said over the phone that you knew who Queen Bee's host was. Explain.”

“Oh!” Viridian turned to him. “It’s the invisible girl!”

Shouta froze. Of course it was. After the fiasco with the waitress, All for One would have known that Viridian and the heroes would be

suspicious of any girl with an eyepatch. Possessing a literally invisible hero student would not only allow Queen Bee to remain hidden, but would allow her to funnel inside information about UA to the villain factory with very few problems. No wonder the villains had known that All Might was supposed to be on the USJ trip. Hagakure had told them.

He groaned, “And how do you know this? You know that we can’t afford to be wrong.”

Viridian nodded seriously, “First off, logic, but I know you already figured that out. Second, I was watching the sports festival and saw multiple bees disappear right above her uniform.”

“Of course you did.” Shouta muttered and glanced over at Nedzu, who looked like a kid on Christmas morning. “Alright. Let’s do this, I guess.”

“Um…I’m a little lost.” Kaminari piped up. “Who’s Queen Bee? And what do they have to do with Hagakure?”

Shouta facepalmed as Viridian blushed, “Oh, uh, well, um…”

“Queen Bee is an animal with a quirk.” Nedzu explained. “She is an insect and a villain. However, to survive, she needs to possess a human host. In this case, poor Hagakure.”

“Her invisibility helped mask the obvious signs of possession and the villains have been using her as a spy. Most likely since before UA even started.” Shouta added. “Because, obviously, making a teenage girl into a literal hive mind is a wonderful idea.”

Viridian wrung his hands nervously, “The biggest thing is that Queen Bee is a parasite, right? But she can’t survive without a host, which means that if the host dies, she does.”

“Exactly right!” Nedzu praised. “We have, of course, managed to save hosts in the past by temporarily stopping their hearts to force the queen to leave, and then reviving them, usually through electronic means like young Viridian here undoubtedly had in mind when asking for your assistance. All other methods have, regrettably, ended in failure.”

Kaminari let out a gigantic sigh of relief, “Oh, *that’s* what you meant! Seriously, dude! You almost stopped *my* heart! Couldn’t you think of a better way to phrase that than *I need you to kill someone?!”*

“Problem Child…” Shouta scolded. “Really?”

“Um…” Viridian looked between the two of them and winced, “S-sorry?”

“But now that we know who she’s in, how do we get close enough to get her out?” Shouta asked. “You know the risks of showing our hand prematurely.”

To his surprise, Viridian actually smiled, “That’s where Denki comes in!”

Shouta almost did a double take. He’d known that Viridian had taught Kaminari how to fight, but to be on a first name basis with him, their relationship must be deeper than he’d initially assumed. He’d have to look into Kaminari’s friends and family, especially because if Viridian was comfortable using Kaminari’s first name, he was most likely comfortable using Viridian’s.

He forced his attention back to the moment as the kids started talking again.

“Wait.” Kaminari’s eyes narrowed. “I thought I was just here to be the defibrillator.”

“That too, but um…” Viridian bit his lip, “you were involved with that cheerleader outfit prank, right Denki?”

Kaminari turned bright red and Shouta turned to glare at him, “Oh? And what prank was this? I’ve been too busy preparing for a problem child of a vigilante to sit in the booth and watch everything, so go ahead. Enlighten me, Kaminari.”

“Uh…” Kaminari smiled sheepishly. “Well, Mineta *might* have told the girls that you wanted them to wear the cheerleading outfits during the break games? And I might have fallen for it and encouraged it…”

Shouta groaned, “Kaminari…”

“But it’s ok!” Viridian cut him off. “Don’t get him in trouble, it gives him the perfect excuse to get her alone!”

Shouta raised an eyebrow, “And how is that?”

“Well…” Viridian smiled and turned to Kaminari. “You know how we talked about using flirting as a weapon?”

Chapter End Notes

Memes!
X X X

Lure

Chapter Summary

Denki flirts like his life depends on it.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Claire;P
That_one_mimic
Hattie
Munchin n crunchin on ice
Vermillion
Macs-15
Presudeosk X
Pandaakatsuki X
Mintii
Julie-O
Color.ns

Memes at the End!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

They all stared at Viridian in shock for a moment before Nedzu hummed thoughtfully, sounding far too pleased for Shouta's liking, "Yes, that *does* sound promising, doesn't it Aizawa?"

Shouta pinched the bridge of his nose and groaned, "I can't believe we're actually approving this."

"Uh..." Kaminari's eyes ficked between the three of them, "I think I might be a little confused, because it sounds like you want me to…"

"Seduce a fellow classmate so you can get her alone and deliver an electric shock strong enough to stop her heart?" Shouta deadpanned. "Because yes, it seems like that's exactly the plan. How do you even come up with these ideas, problem child?"

"It makes sense!" Viridian defended. "Plus, he flirted with the previous host too, so it's only logical that…"

"Wait, what?!" Kaminari yelled. "When was this?!"

“Oh…” Viridian swallowed nervously. “Um...do you remember Kohaku?”

“Yeah, of course, but what does that have to do with…” Kaminari trailed off as he took in Viridian’s expression. “...oh.”

Viridian had tears in his eyes behind the goggles, “Yeah…”

“That is, of course, why it is imperative that Queen Bee be taken by surprise this time around.” Nedzu said kindly. “We must not only defeat the villain, but save her victim as well.”

Shouta put a hand on Kaminari’s shoulder, “You don’t have to do this, you know. It might take us a few minutes, but we’ll figure out another way to get her alone. You’re not a hero yet, so you don’t have any obligation to go along with this.”

“No, I…I’ll do it, just…” Kaminari bit his lip. “Um, Viridian, can I talk to you for a minute?”

Viridian frowned, “Of course...what’s up?”

Kaminari pulled the problem child into the corner and glanced nervously back at Shouta and Nedzu, who pretended not to be paying attention, before lowering his voice so that they had to strain to hear him, “Um, I just kinda wanna make sure that you’re actually ok with this?”

“Yeah?” Viridian looked slightly confused. “Denks, it’s my plan, why wouldn’t I be ok with it?”

“I know that, it’s just…” Kaminari shrugged awkwardly. “Are you sure you’re ok with me, like, flirting with other people and all that?”

Oh no…

Shouta had to resist the urge to snort when the problem child somehow managed to look even *more* confused, “Why wouldn’t I be? I mean this is why you learned to flirt in the first place, right?”

Kaminari looked surprised and Shouta shook his head fondly. Of course the problem child had absolutely zero idea that he was supposed to be jealous and let the whole thing go completely over his head. Poor Kaminari...dating Viridian was sure to be an interesting experience and that was if the problem child even knew they were dating, which Shouta wasn’t convinced wasn’t the case. Poor kid.

After a moment, Kaminari turned back to them and nodded firmly, “Leave it to me. You want me to bring her back here, right?”

“If it’s not too much trouble.” Nedzu smiled pleasantly. “Good luck!”

Kaminari nodded and walked out, closing the door behind him. Shouta raised one eyebrow and turned to Viridian, “So, how do you two know each other?”

Viridian turned bright red and started sputtering while Shouta smirked. After all the stress the kid put him through, he deserved to suffer just a little.

Queen Bee let herself enjoy the games as she observed her classmates. The sport festival was a treasure trove of information and even though she knew All for One was watching from his cave, there were plenty of little moments like these that would give her some nice tidbits to feed to him, which was essential considering how pissy Sensei had been lately. Sure, the poison hadn’t worked *quite* as well on the failed experiment as they’d hoped, but that was why Sensei had put the failsafe into his programming. Even another brainwasher wouldn’t have been able to break Sensei’s control without killing the guinea pig unless they were somehow stronger than All for One, which was honestly laughable, so the only thing those heroes had accomplished was killing their key witness and doing her job for her. It was enough to make her giggle.

“You’ve got a pretty cute laugh, Hagakure.”

Queen Bee startled and turned to see Kaminari leaning against the wall, smiling softly at her. She blushed, which would have been cute if her host’s face were just *visible* , and she giggled again. Was he really falling for her *again?* She must be doing something right to make him fall for her twice in two different hosts, and the best part was that the poor boy had no idea!

This was going to be fun.

“Oh that’s so sweet, Kaminari! You must like cute things a lot, huh?” She swished her mini skirt at him teasingly. “I hear these awesome outfits were your idea.”

Kaminari blushed and shrugged, “Guilty as charged. What can I say? You all rock them even better than I imagined you would.”

Queen Bee leaned closer, grinning at the way Kaminari's eyes widened. He was so easy to fluster! She hadn't been able to do much more than tease him in her last host, but now she was tempted to do more. Mina hadn't shut up about his mystery phone call and whoever he was dating, but how satisfying would it be to steal his heart from his poor little lover and then use him as an extra spy, just to rub salt in the wound. It almost made her buzz in excitement.

He flinched when she touched his arm softly, "Oh? So you've been imagining us?"

Kaminari swallowed dryly, "Uh...some more than others."

That *did* make her buzz and she felt a wave of restlessness go through her swarm as she spoke quickly to distract him from the soft sound, "So what about your mystery lover? You know, the phone call from earlier?"

"Well…" Kaminari had recovered and leaned closer, probably aiming to whisper in her ear, but ended up nose to nose with her instead, "That was only one date, so it's not like we made a commitment, and he's not the one in front of me, is he?"

Queen Bee felt a surge of pride and had to physically stop herself from bursting out laughing. Had she really seduced him straight? Oh, this was just too good. Why hadn't she done this earlier, it was so much fun!

"We still have a little bit of time before the last round starts." She said coyly. "Do you wanna go somewhere a little more *invisible?* Aizawa did tell us to have fun, after all."

Kaminari smirked and put a hand on her waist, "That sounds perfect."

"I have a hypothesis." Nedzu said, getting straight back to business and giving Izuku a much needed distraction so that he didn't have to answer Eraser's question. "With Queen Bee present on site, how easy do you think it would be to hack the entire hive at once?"

"Um...not *easy,* " Izuku stuttered. "But probably possible. As the queen it's almost like she's the motherboard, right? All the rest are connected to her, so if we can somehow interrupt that connection…"

"Then you can make sure the entire hive gets destroyed." Eraser finished. "She can regenerate from even a single bee, so we can't

afford to miss any."

Izuku sat down cross legged on the floor and pulled out his laptop, "If we can make the hive think *we're* the queen, then that should be pretty simple. I just need to change a few things...we want control, not just attraction, right?"

"Yes" Nedzu pulled a small laptop of his own out of somewhere Izuku couldn't see. "And could you perhaps send me your code? I have some hacking experience myself and you know what they say, two heads are better than one and all that."

"Oh, um…" Izuku frowned. "It's not really anything that special. I mean, I'll send it to you, but… well, it's more functional than anything else, so don't expect it to be pretty like one of yours probably is. I'm sorry."

Eraser sighed, "Kid, prioritizing function is only logical. And Nedzu doesn't have time to write a whole professional level program before Kaminari comes back, or did you forget we're on a time limit?"

"No, but, uh…" Izuku screwed his eyes shut and forced himself to send over the code. "It's just...this is Nedzu! He has an intelligence quirk and everything! It's intimidating, ok?"

Nedzu chuckled, "Intelligence quirks are often overrated, I'd found. Most people highly underestimate the natural potential of the human brain."

Izuku stared at him. Nedzu hadn't discounted his intelligence just because he didn't have a quirk that made him smarter, but from the way he was talking, he thought that a person without an intelligence quirk might even be able to compete on the same level as someone with one, which was just unthinkable. Izuku shook his head and turned his attention back to the program, occasionally thinking out loud and suggesting a change to the code until both he and Nedzu were fairly confident it would work while Eraser watched from the corner.

They all froze when they heard voices coming down the hall toward them, "Where are you taking me, Kaminari? I was expecting to be pulled into the first supply closet we passed!"

Denki laughed, "What kinda guy do you take me for? I think we can come up with something a little classier than a closet."

He held the door open for her and Izuku could tell the exact moment when she turned her head toward them, because she froze and an angry buzzing filled the air, “You little…”

Denki panicked and grabbed her arm, “I’m sorry.”

Her body sized and flashed with lightning as Denki channeled his quirk through her. When he stopped, she collapsed and he caught her, lowering her body slowly to the floor and staring up at Izuku with barely concealed terror, “Uh, did it work?”

Eraser knelt beside him, “Check her heartbeat, Kaminari. Do you know how?”

“Um...like this, right?” Denki pressed two fingers to her neck. “Oh, god. She...I can’t feel anything!”

“That’s good. That was the goal, remember?” Eraser kept his voice level and helped keep Denki grounded. “She can survive a few minutes without a heartbeat, so just give it a little longer.”

After what seemed like an eternity, but was probably about thirty seconds, something started flickering in and out of visibility where Hagakure’s head should be and Izuku gasped as Queen Bee pulled herself out of Hagakure’s eye socket, a slight trail of blood flicking behind her stinger. There was significantly less blood than when she’d killed Kohaku, though, so their plan must have worked. Hagakure was safe...theoretically.

“Oh, um…” Denki reached into a bag by his side and pulled out a jar. “I had Yaoyorozu make this, I didn’t know if…”

“This will work quite nicely.” Nedzu took the jar and set it down beside Eraser. “I’m sure you can handle this, Aizawa?”

Eraser nodded and wrapped his scarf around his arms so that it formed a makeshift net, “Got it. You two better get to work before her reinforcements arrive.”

Izuku and Nedzu glanced at each other and nodded in determination. Nedzu sat back down, “Have you isolated her signature.”

“Almost…” Izuku muttered. “There it is! Oh, that must be her connection to the rest of the hive…”

He trailed off as the buzzing got louder and he glanced over to see

Eraserhead forcing Queen Bee into the jar, “Focus Viridian. Me and Kaminari will handle Queen Bee and Hagakure. You need to deal with the rest of the hive.”

Izuku gulped and nodded, “Um, yeah, so that’s how she’s connecting, so let me see if maybe we can clone the signal…”

He was vaguely aware of Denki starting chest compressions beside him, but Eraser was right. He trusted him to take care of his friend and talk him through reviving the host. His job was to make sure Queen Bee couldn’t just turn around and find another host.

Izuku cloned the signal and scanned through the commands, “Most of the bees have already been ordered to come here, I’m gonna expand the command for the whole hive and...good they’re responding as if the order came from the Queen, not an outside party.”

“Good work, Viridian.” Nedzu praised. “Now, let’s see...we don’t want to call too much attention to the destruction of the hive, but an explosion this large will be hard to hide.”

Izuku thought for a minute. They could put them somewhere isolated, or in one of the training grounds at UA, but that would make the news and a big explosion near or in UA on the day of the sports festival wasn’t going to be good for publicity. But if they went to far away, they wouldn’t be able to tell if there were people there or other things that could be hurt by an entire swarm of exploding bees.

He heard coughing and glanced over to see Hagakure sitting up, crying as Denki tried to comfort her and Eraser rubbed circles onto her back. Izuku heaved a sigh of relief. They’d saved the host. He knew that it was Eraser’s job and everything, but it was still amazing that he’d dropped everything to help Izuku pull off such a crazy plan, especially when he was announcing for the largest event of the year.

Izuku gasped as an idea occurred to him, “So what if we don’t try to hide it?”

Nedzu smiled approvingly, “And how would we accomplish that?”

Izuku frowned, “Eraser, you’re announcing right?”

Eraser shot him a suspicious glance, “Not at the moment.”

“I know, but…” Izuku smiled and sent a few of the bees on a small detour to the support course labs, which hopefully had what he

needed. “When you have a minute, can you tell Present Mic that there’s going to be a fireworks display before the third round?”

Chapter End Notes

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

Next Update: June 18, 2021 (MDT)

Explosion

Chapter Summary

Fireworks and aftermath.

I'm in a weird mood, so you get an extra chapter this week. Enjoy!

Chapter Notes

Again, weird mood and I posted yesterday, so I'm not linking anything this chapter. You'll get that stuff friday.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Don’t mind the bees. I took down the queen and took control of them.

Katsuki rolled his eyes and shoved his phone back in his pocket. Izuku’s texts were getting weirder, but he couldn't help feeling proud of the nerd. He hadn’t heard Eraser announcing any of the in-between games, so either he was asleep, or Izuku was finally learning that he could ask the heroes for help and they would actually listen.

The games were almost over and Katsuki felt a small smile pull at his lips as Uraraka made her way toward him. Even though it had been a prank, most of the girls were still wearing their cheer outfits and Uraraka’s fit her perfectly, emphasizing her curves while being long and full enough that she could probably fight in it if she needed to, not that she would need to. She could always just ditch the skirt and go with the matching shorts Yaoyorozu had made for her to wear underneath.

He didn’t let himself stare long, but Uraraka’s naturally pink cheeks seemed a little darker than normal, so he’d probably been caught. He had no idea what to do about that though, so he just ignored her in favor of chugging his water.

Uraraka shooker her head and nudged his arm, “Have you seen the matchups yet?”

“Yeah.” Katsuki glanced up. “I guess they’re pitting us against each other, huh?”

Uraraka grinned, “I guess so. Think you can win, Kacchan?”

Katsuki shrugged, “Don’t need to. Still, don’t expect me to go easy on ya, cheeks.”

“If you do, I’ll get Aoyama to glitter bomb your backpack.” Uraraka threatened. “Don't you dare hold back.”

“That’d be fucking insult.” Katsuki rolled his eyes. “And stupid. If I don’t go hard, how will all those recruiters see what you’re really made of? I think I’d be pretty shitty support if I didn’t help you show off.”

Uraraka rolled her eyes, “You can win, you know. We both know you’re stronger than me and I know you’ve got this whole, *standing in my shadow* strategy, but I won’t be mad if you decide you wanna go on and try for first place.”

“Nah, you can take the spotlight cheeks.” Katsuki took another swig of his water. “Just don’t make me look like an idiot, alright?”

“Alright.” Uraraka bit her lip. “And you can call me Ochako, you know? We’ve been fighting pretty well together, so I’d say we probably qualify as friends now, don’t you?”

Katsuki blinked. He hadn’t really realized that, but yeah, they probably *were* friends at this point, which meant that he had somehow gotten a *lot* better at choosing his company since middle school. Those idiot extras couldn’t even hold a candle to badass fighters like Shinso and Urar...Katsuki shook his head and gave her a teasing look, “Whatever you say, Cheeks.”

Ochako punched his arm, “Alright, *Kacchan,* have it your way.”

Katsuki grinned and went to take another drink, freezing when a loud buzzing started echoing around the stadium. Ochako glanced at him, then glanced up and Katsuki spilled half the water bottle on his hand as he crumpled the cheap plastic, “Oh fuck.”

Ochako looked at him, “You don’t like bees, right? Something about…”

“Not knowing who they’re reporting to.” Katsuki forced himself to take a deep breath, but didn’t take his eyes off the swarm as it slowly blocked out the sun. “I think I know this time though, I just hope Izuku actually knows what he’s doing.”

“Izuku…” Ochako frowned. “Is that who you were talking to earlier?”

“Yeah.” Katsuki nodded, hovering a hand against the small of Ochako’s back so that he could push her down and protect her if he needed to. “If these bastards attack, I want you to run, ok Cheeks?”

Ochako shot him a quick glare, “Not a chance, Kacchan. If they attack, I’m fighting. There are civilians in those stands.”

“Cheeks…” Katsuki growled a warning, but was cut off by Present Mic’s cheerful voice echoing through the stadium.

“Isn’t that a breathtaking sight, folks?” Mic yelled. “That’s our support course for you, always going plus ultra like this. So sit back, relax, and enjoy this drone powered fireworks show before the third round begins!”

The bees began exploding and Katsuki found himself grinning sharply, “That bastard actually did it. Damn nerd.”

Ochako looked at him in confusion, “Did what?”

Katsuki grinned at her, “Took down the villain and saved the day. Don’t worry about it too much, cheeks. Just enjoy the show.”

Ochako huffed, but looked up, taking a step back to get a better look as every single bee was wiped out in a colorful explosion. Katsuki didn’t realize he’d never moved his hand until it was all of a sudden resting on her hip, but she hadn’t said anything and calling attention to it now would just make everything more awkward, so he took the coward’s way out and just left it there, smiling slightly as they watched the show.

He’d really have to thank Izuku after this.

All for One ground his teeth together as he listened to the alleged *fireworks display* that had taken the entire sports festival by surprise. The crowds were cheering and enjoying themselves, all infuriatingly unaware of the months and *years* of preparation that had just been quite literally blown to smithereens by a meddlesome kazoo player. The vigilante had even had the audacity to fill some of the bees with colored powers and chemicals from the support students’ supplies so that they actually looked like real fireworks. It was as if he thought burning an entire movement of All for One’s symphony was something worth celebrating, instead of a death sentence.

Queen Bee had outlived her usefulness, that much was clear. Her

entire hive was gone and would take too long to regenerate even if she hadn't gotten herself captured by the heroes and this was far from her first mistake, so she would have to be eliminated as soon as possible. Additional chaos would be advantageous as well, but there was one thing All for One was certain of.

Viridian had interrupted his symphony for the last time.

All for One grabbed the microphone that allowed him to speak through the television at the hideout, "Kurogiri, get Shigaraki. I have a mission for you."

Izuku kept an eye on his laptop and waited until the only signal he could detect was queen bee herself before closing down the program and quietly snapping it shut. Eraserhead was helping Denki take care of Hagakure, who was obviously pretty disoriented after being possessed by a villain for so long, and it was sweet watching the two of them comfort her. They were both such amazing heroes.

He stood slowly, careful not to make any sound as he grabbed his bag and inched toward the door. Nedzu raised an eyebrow, but made no move to stop him. He managed to make it almost to the door before Eraserhead's capture weapon wrapped around his wrist, "And just what do you think you're doing, Problem Child?"

"Um…" Izuku gave him a sheepish smile. "Escaping."

Eraser gave him a look before wrapping the capture weapon all the way around Izuku with a flick of his wrist, "Nice try, kid, but you should have thought about that *before* sneaking into UA."

"I didn't sneak in." Izuku muttered. "You left the door unlocked for me."

Eraser smirked, "Same difference. You willingly surrounded yourself with heroes, and this is the only logical outcome. Deal with it."

"In my defense," he tried, "I wasn't exactly thinking that far ahead."

Izuku struggled against the bindings, panicking slightly when the scarf got tighter instead of looser and he realized that this might actually be it. He tried to wiggle and grab any of his weapons, but both his arms were pinned to his sides, so even if he managed to grab any of them, he wasn't at a good angle to use anything besides his knife, which Eraser would probably be looking for. This...this wasn't good. Eraser

was gonna find out he was quirkless and then he was gonna tell everybody and....

“Viri.” Denki’s voice was just enough to cut through his panic. “Breathe with me, ok? You’re gonna be fine.”

“No. I’m not.” Izuku’s face turned hot as his voice cracked. He didn’t want Eraserhead to see him like this, not that he hadn’t before, but it was just one more evidence that he was weak and useless, just like he’d always been. “Denks, they don’t *know.”*

Denki looked confused for a moment before he realized what Izuku was talking about and his eyes got wide, “They don’t know?!”

Izuku shook his head, tears threatening to fall. “No.”

Denki blinked a few times, “Oh…” He glanced toward Eraser and Nedzu. “Well, like, Aizawa’s probably not gonna care that much…”

Izuku shook his head emphatically, “You don’t know that.”

Denki’s face fell, “No...I don’t. I’m sorry.”

“What’s going on?” Eraserhead glanced suspiciously between the two of them. “What exactly don’t I know?”

Izuku stared at the floor while Denki opened and closed his mouth a few times, “Uh, nothing! Well, I mean, obviously you don’t know a lot of things, it’s just this one thing in particular, but well...actually, technically it *is* nothing, but uh…you know what, nevermind, it’s not a big deal.”

Eraserhead, unsurprisingly, looked unconvinced, “Viridian…”

Izuku kept staring at the floor, “Just let me go, Eraserhead. I can’t be a hero.”

Eraserhead sighed, rubbing the bridge of his nose, “Kid, no matter how many times you say that, it doesn’t make it true. Just...you know what, no. You’re joining the hero course whether you want to or not. Come on, problem child, let’s go meet your new classmates.”

Izuku stumbled slightly as Eraser tugged on the scarf as if he was a leash kid, “You’re not taking me to the police?”

“Not at the moment.” Eraser raised an eyebrow. “We’ll get to the paperwork after the festival, but Kaminari needs to get back so he can

actually fight in the third round and in the meantime, hopefully Kacchan and the others will be able to talk some logic into that self-deprecating skull of yours."

Izuku pouted and turned to Denki who looked like he was torn between freeing Izuku and trying not to laugh, "Traitor."

Denki's face fell and he glanced toward Eraser, "do you want me to…"

"No." Izuku said quickly, blinking to keep a tear from falling. "I don't want to get you in trouble and helping an alleged vigilante would definitely…"

Eraser rolled his eyes, "You're a bit more than just an *alleged vigilante,* Viridian."

"Not really." Izuku answered evasively. Who knew, maybe Kacchan and Denki were right and it really wouldn't be that bad, but everything in him was screaming to enjoy Eraser's company while he still had it. He would still have Denki and Kacchan and maybe even Tsu, since she already knew and she didn't seem to hate him yet, he just...he didn't know if he could handle being alone again.

"Kaminari! Where have you been! The third round is about to start." A student ran down the hall at them and stopped short when he saw them. "Is that Viridian?!"

Eraser glared at him, "Iida, aren't you always telling the other students not to run in the halls?"

Iida bowed deeply, "My deepest apologies, but no one could find Kaminari and we did not want him to miss the matches. It is a pleasure to meet you, Viridian. My brother speaks very highly of you."

"See kid?" Eraser had a pleased look on his face. "I'm not the only one who thinks you'd make a great hero. Ingenium thinks so too."

Izuku smiled sadly and turned to Iida, "You're Ingenium's little brother? That's really cool! He must be really proud of you for making it so far in the festival."

"Well, I'm not sure." Iida answered. "I haven't been able to get a hold of him, so he must be on a mission at the moment, but I'm planning on talking to him after the festival!"

Izuku got a glint in his eye and Eraser glared at him, "No. Absolutely

not."

"Ah, come on, Eraser!" Izuku grinned. "Just a few minutes so I can hack his comms and say hello!"

"And of course, the fact that I'll have to untie you so you can use your laptop has absolutely nothing to do with it." Eraser drawled. "Nice try."

"Aww, I'm sure Viri won't run away, right?" Denki gave him an exaggerated wink. "And , like, I'm sure the guy'll get a kick out of it. Ingenium, wasn't it?"

"Oh, my brother will love it." Iida smiled fondly. "Moreso if you manage to surprise him. You know that, Aizawa. You're friends!"

"It's like, classmate bonding!" Izuku added. "You want me to have a good relationship with the students, don't you, Eraser?"

Eraser narrowed his eyes suspiciously, "You're ganging up on me."

"I mean, yeah, kinda…" Denki smiled innocently. "But you'll be here the whole time and I'm sure I...Viri will let you keep a hold of him or something, he just needs his arms free to annoy Ingenium!"

Eraser sighed in defeat, "And if I let you do this, you'll treat it as a chance to bond with your future classmate, not as a chance to escape?"

"Sure!" Izuku answered a little too quickly. "Definitely."

Eraser just rolled his eyes, but Izuku felt the capture weapon loosen slightly, only to tighten again immediately, leaving him still completely wrapped from his elbows up, "Seriously, Eraser? You couldn't give me a *little* more wiggle room?"

"Nope." Eraser deadpanned. "You can still type like that."

Izuku stuck his tongue out and dropped awkwardly to the floor while Denki laughed, "Fine, I'll just have to make this work."

Shigaraki scratched at his neck as Kurogiri opened the portal, "So Queen Bee's finally outlived her usefulness, huh?"

"That does appear to be the case." Kurogiri nodded. "Remember, she and the vigilante are our main targets, everyone else is secondary."

“Yeah, but Sensei still wants us to cause as much panic and chaos as possible, which means I might unlock a second fight with that Kacchan brat.” Shigaraki grinned and placed a hand over his face. “I’m glad Sensei unlocked this level. It’s gonna be a blast.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: June 18, 2021 (MDT)

Attack

Chapter Notes

Art!
Joshonboard X
PJ
That's so Yikes
Malevoint
Blackwinged_angel
Lyniel/Aeodarth
ChicaX X
procratination at it's finest
That's so Yikes

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

More Memes at the End!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Nedzu observed the med-bots as they loaded young hagakure onto a stretcher. Recovery girl had already been made aware of the situation, as unprecedented as it was, and she and Hound Dog were both prepared to receive the girl and give her the best chance at recovery. Now all that was left to do was contact the girl's parents and find a way to keep Queen Bee in custody without her processing a host.

Despite her parasitic nature, Nedzu couldn't help but feel a certain kinship with the villain. They were both quirked animals, afterall, and if her experience with All for ONe had been anything like his time with his own captors, then she had undoubtedly suffered far too much at the hands of humans. Animals like them had to stick together, so he wasn't about to simply throw her to the wolves.

A chill went up his spine and Nedzu's fur stood on end as a portal whirle into existence just down the hall. Shigaraki stuck his head through the portal and grinned widely behind the hand on his face as they made eye contact.

So much for taking time to revel in their victory.

"I'm just gonna hack the cameras real quick." Izuku muttered. "I don't

want to accidently put ingenium in danger by scaring him in the middle of a villain fight."

"Good practice, problem child." Eraser nodded approvingly. "But you're not going to have to hack into things anymore, you know. We can get you your own comm once you have your license."

Izuku blinked back a tear and tried to ignore the way his heart sank, focusing on getting visuals of ingenium, "Your brother's in Hosu right now, righ?"

"Yes, he is." Iida said. "Are you having trouble finding him?"

"No." Izuku said quickly. "It just always takes a minute to…"

He trailed off as he found Ingenium. At first glance, it seemed like a good time to interrupt, but something seemed *off* somehow. Ingenium was looking around like he was looking for something...or someone. Was he in the middle of a chase? He wasn't running, though. Was there something Izuku was missing?

Izuku frowned and scrolled through the cameras near where he'd found ingenium, looking for any bit of context, and he went cold with dread as he caught a glimpse of a bright red scarf disappearing into the alley that Ingenium was about to walk into.

He scrambled to connect to the comms, "Ingenium. This is viridian. I need you to stop right where you are."

Denki started giggling and Iida looked mildly concerned as Eraser sighed, "Did you have to be so dramatic, kid? I know this is a prank, but making him panic is illogical."

iUzku just gave a quick shake of his head to get them to be quiet as he turned his attention back to Ingenium, "Are you looking for the hero killer right now?"

Iida's eyes widened and Denki slammed a hand over his mouth to muffle a gasp. Eraserhead frowned and walked around so that he could look over Izuku's shoulder. On screen, Ingenium was shaking his head.

"I was actually looking for another guy." Ingenium chuckled nervously. "Why? Should I be worried?"

Izuku took a deep breath and let himself fall into his vigilante mode,

“He’s in the alley right beside you. I’m still working on getting a visual of the alley itself, but my guess is that he’s lying in wait for either you or another hero. Don’t go into the alley alone.”

“Obviously.” Ingenium gulped. “Ok, most of my team is off chasing the criminal we’ve been tracking, but I could probably spare one or two to help out here, assuming that Stain doesn’t move. Maybe Crawler could…”

Izuku found a camera facing the alley that he could zoom in on and get at least a semi-decent view of the alley, “Ingenium! Look out!”

Stain had gotten impatient and Ingenium barely managed to dodge the Katana as it sliced through the air near his stomach, “Woah! Not cool. Uh, Viridian, I gotta…”

“Focus on fighting.” Izuku said firmly. “I’ll see if I can’t get you some back up.”

“Um…” Iida looked between Kaminari and Izuku in concern and confusion, “What’s happening. The third round is supposed to start soon, but…”

“Go.” Izuku said firmly, eyes still glued to the computer. “You worry about winning, I’ll worry about your brother. Same goes for you, Denki. Don’t go over your limits and make yourself a complete idiot, though.”

“Right.” Denki gave him a reassuring smile, but Izuku could tell he was nervous underneath. “Just a partial idiot. Got it.”

“Good.” Eraser jerked his head toward the rest of the student areas. “You boys go fight and leave the heroism to us.”

Shigaraki didn’t stop grinning as he stalked down the hall toward Nedzu, “Kurogiri, you go take care of the vigilante brat. I’ll squash the bug. Now, rat, hand her over.”

“I do not believe that I will.” Nedzu said calmly. “Queen Bee has been arrested, so giving her back to the villains would be rather counterproductive. I’m sure you understand.”

“Nice try.” Shigaraki’s grin got wider. “But killing a few npcs is always a fun part of any quest.”

He lunged forward and Nedzu dropped, protecting the jar with queen bee as Shigaraki disintegrated part of the wall behind him. Nedzu immediately went for his ankles, biting and scratching at the exposed skin and just managing to scramble backwards as Shigaraki grabbed his waistcoat. It ripped and dissolved into dust and scraps as Kurogiri disappeared and in the split second that Nedzu was distracted trying to figure out a way to get him to stay put, Shigaraki grabbed the jar.

They both reached for Queen Bee as she tried to flutter away from her ruined prison, but Shigaraki was taller and reached her first as she flew toward the ceiling. Nedzu watched in horror as his hand closed around her and the last remnant of the hive dissolved into a small handful of dust and blood. Shigaraki wiped his hand on his pants and turned to him, “Main quest: completed. Side quest unlocked: Cat and Mouse.”

Nedzu gasped. He’d never been the best in physical fights, his intellect and small stature making him much more effective as a strategist rather than a head on fighter. It didn’t make him any less of a hero, but it did mean that he had to know when backup was necessary and now definitely qualified. Nedzu ran down the hall, pressing a secret combination on the floor tiles that only he knew and Shigaraki’s hand closed on air as a trap door opened and Nedzu dropped down into a tunnel. He slammed the door behind him and used the brief reprieve to turn on his comms and radio the heroes on duty, “Hero team C, report to the student tunnels. Hero B, standby for possible evacuations of sections F through M. Present Mic. Midnight. Contact the backup announcers and report to my location. We have a security breach.”

Shouta had to firmly make sure that Kaminari and Iida were well on their way toward the festival before he was able to turn his attention back to Viridian, but he knew the kid wasn’t going to run right now, not when there were people to save. He hadn’t even noticed Shout’as capture weapon loosening. The kid’s attention was completely on the screen and he seemed to be giving a report of the situation to Crawler, although he would interrupt himself occasionally with observations about Stain’s quirk or strategies that Ingenium could use to keep himself alive and uninjured until back up arrived. It was ridiculously impressive, but Shouta could see the way Viridian was vibrating restlessly, body practically begging to be involved in the fight himself. No wonder the kid had chosen to go back to fighting on the streets instead of staying virtual after breaking his arm. He wanted to fight and save people like a real hero.

“Sho!” Hizashi ran up toward him, only briefly glancing toward Viridian on the floor. “Nedzu said you were probably busy with the kid. We have a problem.”

“Obviously.” Shouta snorted. “What are you doing away from the announcement booth?”

“I had Amplifier take over.” Hizashi panted. “There’s been a security breach. Shou…it’s him.”

Shouta frowned, hoping that he was misunderstanding, “Who?”

Nemuri joined the conversation, jogging toward them with her whip at the ready and sections of her costume already ripped for easy access to her quirk, “The league of villains, the villain factory. Whatever you call them. Whoever they are, they got in with Kurogiri.”

“Kurogiri?” Shouto breathed.

Hizashi nodded, “Oboro is here.”

Shouta glanced toward Viridian. The kid was so in the zone, he hadn’t even realized the others had arrived, “I can’t…”

“Shouta.” Nemuri pleaded. “We might not get another chance to save him.”

He cursed under his breath. The kid would stay put for as long as it took to save Tensei, so if they could save Shirakumo quickly enough…Nemuri was right, with a teleportation quirk in the equation, they wouldn’t ever get another chance to save him.

“Fine.” He forced himself to turn away from his problem child. “Let’s get this over with quickly.”

There had been a weird delay before the third round. Hitoshi wasn’t quite sure what was going on, but he assumed that Present Mic had gotten sick or something, because some woman was doing the announcing right now. His first match was against Inasa, the wind guy he’d brainwashed during the cavalry battle, which meant that he might have figured out how his quirk worked. He was stronger than he’d been before, but that wasn’t going to do much good against a literal tornado. How was he still screwed?

The announcer lady sounded excited as her voice echoed over the

speakers, “Is everybody ready to watch these epic battles?! First round is the 1A’s human tornado, Yoarashi Inasa who’ll be fighting the underdog from General Studies, Hitoshi Shinso!!!”

Hitoshi took a deep breath and took a step forward when he felt something wrap around his wrist and hold him back. He swallowed a yelp and whirled around to see Eraserhead staring at him intensely, “You’re forfeiting the match. Come with me.”

“What?” Hitoshi was suddenly filled with rage, “Look, I know it’s not the best matchup and I might not win, but you’re not even going to give me a chance?! This is my last chance to get in the hero course and you’re not even going to let me *try?!”*

Eraserhead gave him a look, “You’re already guaranteed entry into the hero course, getting far enough in the sports festival was just a formality, and it’s better to not advertise your quirk anyway. You have to understand that I wouldn’t be asking you to do this if it wasn’t an emergency.”

Hitoshi blinked, “I’m already guaranteed...wait, what do you mean an emergency?”

“Do you remember when Kacchan took you to break the brainwashing on a friend of his?” Eraser asked. When Hitoshi hesitantly nodded, he continued. “What if I were to tell you that Ogawa wasn’t the only victim?”

Hitoshi’s eyes widened as he realized what Aizawa was getting at. He wasn’t quite sure he was ready, but when Eraserhead looked at him, there was a challenge in his eyes that Hitoshi couldn’t turn down.

“So, Shinso.” Eraserhead raised an eyebrow. “Are you ready to be a hero?”

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X

Next Update: June 21, 2021 (MDT)

Sports Festival

Chapter Summary

> Somehow, the fights everyone came to see are actually the ones with the lowest stakes...

Chapter Notes

> Art!
> Kaiko X
> CardinalCat
> SangwooB.Benson
> Q
> MiHwa
>
> Memes!
> X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku was ridiculously grateful for Crawlers ability to do quick turns as he watched Ingenium hold off the hero killer. Thankfully, Stain's main strategy was using the element of surprise to get the drop on his victims, so Izuku's interference had put him at a disadvantage. He was still pretty fast, but that didn't count for much against a speed-based hero like Ingenium, so for the moment, they were just dodging eachother's blows in a terrifying dance and waiting for the other to slip up. It wasn't the *best,* but it was better than Ingenium bleeding out with no back up, so Izuku was gonna take what he could get.

"Crawler is about a minute out." Izuku said. "The rest of your team has been informed and more back-up is on the way, but Crawler's the fastest."

"Good" Ingenium panted. "This guy's a pain."

Izuku chuckled and went to check on Crawler, but a cry called his attention back to Ingenium, who was now bleeding heavily, "Ingenium!"

"I'm fine." Ingenium grunted. "It looks bad, but the cut's not too deep. I can still fight."

"You fake heroes never know when to give up." Stain licked his

katana and Ingenium collapsed onto the floor. “You should just stay down.”

“I…I can’t move.” Ingenium’s voice was laced with the beginnings of panic. “I can’t move!”

Izuku immediately linked to Crawler’s comm, “Ingenium is down. I repeat, Ingenium is down! It’s an ingestion based blood paralyzation.”

Crawler pushed himself even faster, “A what?!”

Izuku scrambled for his weapons, but they wouldn’t do any good. He was useless, “Whatever you do, don’t let Stain drink your blood.”

“Don’t get bit by the vampire.” Crawler nodded. “Got it.”

“Viridian?” Ingenium’s whisper made Izuku perk up, blinking back a tear. “Tell Tenya I’m sorry.”

Izuku watched desperately as Stain raised his katana again, “Hurry…”

He flinched as the katana came down, but he forced himself to watch, figuring he owed Ingenium that much, so he didn’t miss it when Stain was suddenly thrown against the wall by a burst of air.

“Seriously, Stendall?” Crawler scowled as he crouched at the entrance to the ally. “Ingenium’s one of the good ones.”

Nedzu scurried away as soon as the first team of heroes was on route to their location. He’d landed oddly on his ankle when he’d fallen into the tunnels, or at least he must have because it was hurting, but he ignored it and focused on running faster than the villain chasing him. Shigaraki had disintegrated parts of the floor to gain access to the tunnels and was using his quirk to destroy every obstacle in his way during the chase, something that Nedzu planned to take full advantage of. He ducked through holes in the walls and tight squeezes, leading Shigaraki in a tight circle until he’d disintegrated the supports for the floor immediately above them, then scurried up the ladder and onto one of the remaining steady pieces of flooring as the section they’d been under suddenly collapsed and trapped his opponent. It wouldn’t hold him for long, obviously, but considering that Rock Lock was currently using pieces of rubble to cross the gap, it was more than long enough for backup to arrive.

Rock Lock skidded to a stop beside him right as the rubble in the hole

started to disintegrate, “What’s the situation?”

Nedzu nodded toward where Shigaraki was pulling himself up, the hand on his face knocked askew and several of the others missing, “The villain factory. We managed to take care of miss Queen Bee but it does appear that All for One took an issue with that. I am not sure of Kurogiri’s current location, but Eraserhead, Present Mic, and Midnight are already on route.”

“And of course it had to be the event with hundreds of kids.” Rock Lock scowled. “These villains don’t even have rock bottom, do they?”

Shigaraki dashed toward them and Nedzu watched as Rock Lock ducked beneath his outstretched hand and locked his shoes in place. It didn’t take long for Shigaraki to dust his way out of *that* particular trap, but by that point two more heroes had shown up to fight him and their odds didn’t look quite so desperate, but Nedzu’s fur bristled as he pulled out his laptop and connected to the arena’s security systems. He was going to make sure All for One regretted ever targeting these children.

Hitoshi hurried behind Eraserhead, trying his best to keep up as they met up with Present Mic and Midnight. Well...there went his *the announcer just got sick* theory. Both heroes looked worried and Midnight gave Hitoshi a quick look-over, “This the kid?”

“Yeah.” Eraser squeezed Hitoshi’s shoulder in reassurance. “He’s done it before, so he’s our best bet.”

Hitoshi didn’t know quite what else to do, so he just nodded in greeting, “Hey.”

“Hey.” Mic gave him a tight smile. “Kurogiri is basically just randomly teleporting around all the back areas right now, almost like he’s looking for something, but Nedzu didn’t have time to give a full report. He hasn’t been here yet, though, which means it should only be a matter of time until he comes to us. You ready?”

Hitoshi wasn’t quite sure if he was, but wasn’t this kinda his final test to transfer into the hero course? Sure, Eraser had *said* his spot was guaranteed, but there was no way that was true. This had to be some sort of final test to see how he dealt with unpredictable situations or something like that and hitoshi would be damned if he was going to give up and fail at the last minute… or at least that’s how he felt until a portal appeared behind them and hitoshi realized that they were

dealing with the same psychopaths that attacked the usj. This wasn't a test, was it?

"Kurogiri used to go by Oboro Shirakumo." Eraser said lowly. "He was friends with me and Mic in high school. You might be able to use that to get him to respond."

Hitoshi gulped as the mist drew together and formed a person that emerged from the portal. The mist guy, Kurogiri, took one look at them and immediately started striding their way, "Eraser, how fortunate. Perhaps you could point me in the direction of the young vigilante? He is here today, correct? That was Sensei's suspicion at least"

Eraserhead went pale and Hitoshi froze. If he was right, they were talking about the hoodie kid from the hospital, weren't they? After his migraine had calmed down, the detective had explained that hoodie kid was actually a vigilante that Eraserhead had been trying to catch for almost a year now, which explained why Bakugo had never referred to him by name and why he'd run as soon as he heard them coming. Hitoshi hadn't been quite sure why Bakugo had helped a vigilante escape when he wanted to be a hero but half of what Katsuki did made absolutely zero sense, so he hadn't questioned it too much. Maybe he should have because it seemed like the villains were now coming after the vigilante for revenge. Poor kid.

Actually, on second thought, poor mist guy too. If he was right, this guy was under the control of the same villains as bakugo's friend had been, which meant that he was being sent to kill someone without ever being given the choice of whether or not he actually wanted to.

Hitoshi's face filled with determination fueled by anger. Villains like that had made his life hell growing up. Screw getting into the hero course. He was going to save this guy if it killed him. He wasn't gonna let anyone suffer from what his quirk could have been, not when he was strong enough to save them!

Eraserhead had canceled Kurogiri's quirk so he couldn't go anywhere and Midnight was hitting him with just enough of her quirk to disorient him but not quite enough to put him to sleep as Mic pleaded, "I know you're still in there somewhere please listen to us. Come back to us! You're stronger than these villains, remember? Please come back to us!"

All three heroes had tears in their eyes and Hitoshi knew he couldn't

wait any longer, “Hey misty man! You really know these dorks? Got any embarrassing stories? I need some good blackmail.”

Mic and Midnight gaped in shock and Eraserhead sighed like he was trying to empty his entire lung capacity, but it *worked.*

“I regret to inform you that I have never seen these individuals in my life.” Kurogiri said, pulling himself up slightly to look more dignified. “Excepting Eraserhead, of course….”

“We’ll see if you still say that when your brain is your own again...or at least mine.” Hitoshi grunted, already straining with effort as Shirakumo tried to push him out as soon as he took control. To make it worse, he obviously had some of those vestiges or whatever they were sharing his body, and they were fighting him full force as well. “Stop fighting me you idiots! Can’t you see I'm trying to help him?”

“Shinso!” Midnight shot him a scanalized look. “Eraser, are you really sure about this?”

Eraser just looked tired, “Kid’s been hanging out too much with Kacchan.”

HItoshi grit his teeth as the vestiges pushed back harder, “Look, I’m sorry. I know that vigilante kid was more polite about it or whatever but I can’t push the other brainwashers out if I’m fighting all of you too!”

The difficulty dropped off suddenly and he breathed a sigh of relief as he enjoyed his last few seconds of peace, “Thanks. Now let’s do this.”

He braced himself as he prepared to fight the other brainwasher. It was probably going to be even worse than last time considering that the control seemed to be a lot more complete and the other guy already knew Hitoshi was a threat. He took a deep breath, “Obey my commands above any others.”

Katsuki frowned as he and Ochako got ready to go prep for their match, “Something’s wrong.”

Ochako punched his arm reassuringly, “You’re just paranoid after the whole bee thing earlier with your friend. Just focus on our fight and you’ll be fine.”

“No…” Katsuki said slowly. “It’s more than that. Shinso shouldn’t

have forfeited his match with Inasa."

Kirishima grimaced, "It *was* kinda unmanly of him."

"All that passion! Wasted on a cowardly opponent!" Inasa cried. "It's practically painful!"

"Oh, shut up, wind boy." Katsuki snapped. "What I mean is that Shinso's been trying to get into the hero course, so there had to have been something pretty fucking big to get him to just abandon match like that."

"Maybe he had a family emergency?" Sero suggested.

"I think it's bigger than that." Katsuki said. "Look at the heroes. They're all on high alert about something, like they're prepping for something. I think there might be a villain somewhere."

"What?!" Mineta started trembling. "Why aren't they evacuating?!"

"There's too many people." Mina answered. "Unless it's someone who can destroy the whole stadium, evacuating would be more dangerous than staying put because of the risk of causing a panic and people trampling each other and losing control of their quirks. I went to a concert once where someone got high and accidentally started a fire with their quirk and they only ever evacuated the section he was sitting in. the rest of us just stayed put and the whole thing was over in like, ten minutes."

"Even if it is a villain, we still need to let the heroes handle it.'" Tsu said. "You two are gonna miss your fight if you don't leave now."

"Not happening." Ochako grabbed Katsuki's arm and pulled him out into the hall. "Leave it to the heroes Kacchan. They can handle it."

Katsuki huffed in annoyance as he was dragged, "It's not the heroes I'm worried about."

It was mesmerizing to watch Stain and Crawler fight and Izuku couldn't stop himself from gasping as the Crawler's ability to stick to surfaces combined with Stain's familiarity with alley fights to make it look like they were both bouncing off the walls as they narrowly avoided both each other and Ingenium. As he watched, Izuku's mind whirled, spinning with half-formed ideas of what Stain's weaknesses might be and how Crawler could take advantage of them, "He relies

on sneak attacks and most fights were reported to have lasted a few minutes at the most so he probably wants to avoid a long, drawn out fight…”

He didn’t even realize he was muttering until Ingenium called him out on it, “So we should try to make him fight longer? Draw out the fight?”

“Uh…” Izuku swallowed nervously. “If you can. I don’t want to tell you what to do though! You’re the heroes, but there has to be a reason why he ends his fights so fast. I think his quirk might have a time limit.”

“Nice to know.” Crawler shot another attack, holding Stain off for another moment. “Any idea what it's based on?”

Izuku hummed and took a closer look at Stain, “Maybe something to do with the blood? Ingenium wasn’t paralyzed from the cut, he only froze after Stain licked the blade. It would make sense that it would have something to do with the blood itself? Maybe blood type? I wonder…”

On a hunch, Izuku pulled up a post he’d seen on a hero forum a few months back where the user had been shaming the heroes for how quickly stain had managed to cut them down. It had gotten a lot of hate for victim-blaming, obviously, but the user had created a chart with most of the hero killer’s victims and approximately how long it had taken STain to defeat them. That on its own wouldn't have been that informative, but there was a master list on one of the hero wikis that listed all of the heroes blood types, so Izuku just scanned those until the beginnings of a pattern jumped out at him, “Ingenium, your blood type A, right?”

“Yeah.” Ingenium answered quickly. “Is that bad?”

“Not the best, but workable.” Izuku said. “Crawler, you’ve still got a minute or so until Ingenium can break out of Stain’s quirk, but that’s assuming I’m actually right. Crawler you’re, let me check...type o, right?”

“Yep!” Crawler panted as he narrowly dodged another hit. “Please tell me I hit the jackpot.”

Izuku couldn't help a small huff of laughter, “You did, but still don’t get cut. A shorter paralyzation time still doesn’t mean zero.”

Crawler chuckled, “Yeah, probably best to avoid that. Any other tips?”

“Avoid the pointy end.” Ingenium said dryly.

Izuku blinked in shock and smiled in spite of himself. Were they really joking right now? Heroes were so cool! They managed to be brave even in life threatening situations and trusted their team to have their back. It would be fun to be able to fight in a team like that. A mental image of himself as Eraserhead’s sidekick popped into his brain and Izuku pushed it away forcefully. Even if he did end up getting caught, there was no guarantee he would be able to become a hero and even if he did, Eraser probably wouldn't want him to be his sidekick after he found out he was quirkless. Getting his hopes up would just hurt more.

Crawler kept up the chase for another thirty seconds or so before Ingenium cheered triumphantly and stood staring down Stain, who was looking more and more crazed as the fight went on, “Alright, Hero Killer. Time to show you how *real* heroes fight!”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: June 25, 2021 (MDT)

Chase

Chapter Summary

The fights continue and information is always valuable.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Scar
Xuma
joshonboard
Hattie
Quill

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki smirked as he stared across the field at ochako. “Careful, Pink Cheeks. I’m not gonna go easy on you you know.”

Ochako met his challenge without even flinching, “Don't you dare Kacchan.”

Cementoss looked to make sure they were both ready before nodding, “Begin!”

Uraraka immediately rushed toward him and tried to get him to float, but he exploded her before that could happen. The smokescreen his explosions created was normally pretty useful when *he* was the one taking advantage of it, but he had to give the girl credit for finding a way to turn it against him. Every time he thought he had her pinned, she’d pop up somewhere else like the world's most fucked up game of whack-a-mole. He smirked and let off an even larger explosion when he caught sight of her jack, excited to see how she’d get out of *that* one...except she’d never gotten into it in the first place.

Katsuki stumbled back, eyes wide as she came at him from the side. He would have tripped, but luckily there was no rubble in his path, so he wasn’t down yet, “Pretty smart Cheeks, using your jacket as a diversion like that.”

Ochako didn’t take the bait, staying silent and practically invisible

inside the billowing clouds of smoke around them. Katsuki caught a slight hint of movement and immediately launched an explosion that way. He got lucky and Ochako let out a cry as she was pushed back.

The crowd booed loudly as she slowly pulled herself to her feet and Katsuki wanted to snap at them. Didn't they see how hard she was fighting? Didn't they see how fucking hard he had to work to keep himself from going down? Why were they thinking it was a beatdown when it was an even match?

"You all really don't know what it's like to be a woman in heroics, do you?" Amplifier's giggle echoed around the stadium. "You're looking at Bakugo like he's the big bad wolf and Uraraka's the damsel in distress, and I think it's tragic how often women are underestimated in this industry. Have you figured it out yet? What's happening down on that field isn't a beatdown. It's a strategy!"

Katsuki tensed. A strategy? He'd caught onto her relentless attacks and her use of the smokescreen as a cover to hide her movements, but Amplifier made it sound like there was something he was missing and Ochako's proud smile pretty much confirmed it.

"Thank you, Kacchan." Ochako's breath was heavy and she looked exhausted, but still managed to smirk at him as she pressed her fingertips together. "For keeping your eyes on me."

Katsuki looked up.

There was a fucking meteor shower headed his way. Seriously?! He'd known she was powerful, but this was something else! He *could* use a massive blast and take out the entire attack with one blow, and maybe if things were different, he would have, but he wanted to be an underground hero and showing off an attack like that would hurt him more than it would help. Probably literally, considering the strain it would put on his wrists. Instead, he dodged as best he could and exploded the biggest rocks that looked like they could actually deal some damage, but he still wasn't all too surprised when he felt Uraraka grab his wrist and fling him out of the ring like a ragdoll.

He tumbled to a stop when Ochako released his gravity again and rolled his eyes at her exhausted, triumphant smirk, "Alright, cheeks, you got me. That was pretty fucking awesome."

"Thanks." Ochako's grin got a bit wider. "I thought you'd like it!"

"Uraraka wins!"

Shouto shivered as he made his way off the field and back into the tunnels. Alright, so maybe he had gone a *bit* overboard in his fight against Sero but he still wasn't quite sure if that was because he was angry about what Touya had said or if he was just trying to show off for his long lost brother. When he reached the hall that went up to where class 1A was sitting, he hesitated. He *could* turn left and go back to sit with the class...or he could go say hi to his siblings and make sure Touya hadn't annoyed them to death.

Fuyumi had texted him their seat numbers, not that he'd been planning on ever using them, so it didn't take him long to find them. Touya and Natuso were laughing about something and Fuyumi looked torn about whether her tears were supposed to be happy or annoyed, but she looked mildly amused so Touya couldn't have done anything too terrible. Hopefully.

Natuso let up when he saw him coming. "Yo dude! You were right! He is *alive and he's cool!'*

Touya gave him a smug smile and shouto narrowed his eyes suspiciously until Fuymi sighed, "They've been bonding over their hatred of Endeavor."

"Ah." Shouto nodded. "That makes sense. Can I join?"

Fuyumi gave him a mildly disappointed look, but Natsuo grinned, "of course! That glacier probably had dad rolling in his grave!"

"Did you really need to go that far though?" Fuyumi fretted. "Shouto…"

"Still didn't use our fire." Touya pointed out. "Could've made an even bigger spectacle if you had."

"I wasn't trying to make a spectacle. "Shouto said stubbornly. "I don't need my fire to win."

"Maybe not." Touya shrugged. "But it's still your fire, not the old man's man's. But enough about that, how's Kacchan doing?"

"Not quite sure." Shouto frowned. "You guys call *me* a conspiracy theorist, but he's the one who thinks there's secretly a villain attacking the festival...unless of course he's talking about you, *Dabi.* "

"No, but with the bees…" Touya's eyes widened and he jumped to his

feet. “I gotta go check on something. Good luck on your next match twerp.”

“Aren’t you gonna stay and watch with us?” Fuymi called after him.

“I'll be back!” he was almost too far away for Shouto to catch what he said next. “Assuming I kill those bastards before they kill me.”

HItoshi was pretty sure that the only reason he wasn’t dead yet was because of pure spite. He 100% felt like death warmed over, but there was a certain vindictive pleasure in knowing that the other guy was suffering just as much as he was right now and probably even more considering that Kurogiri and his vestiges were now on Shinso’s side and actively fighting against the other presence.

“Shinso?” Aizawa prompted softly. “Is something wrong? You haven’t said anything in a few minutes.”

Hitoshi just shook his head, wincing at the twinge of pain that shot through his skull at the movement. He kept his eyes screwed shut and used the pain to steady himself, “I’m good, just needed a minute. This bastard putting up one hell of a fight.”

Present Mic sounded confused, “I thought you already asked Oboro to stop.”

“Not him.” Shinso grit his teeth as another wave of resistance hit him like a truck. “The other brainwasher.”

“Oh.” Mic said helplessly. “That sounds...fun?”

Yeah.” Shinso scoffed. “It’s a real blast.”

“Just take your time Shinso.” Midnight said. “I can always knock him out and we can try again later.

“No, I can do this.” Hitoshi took a deep breath and focused on his quirk. “Remember anything the other brainwasher ordered you to forget.”

Ochako leaned against Katsuki’s side and hobbled off the field, focusing on not throwing up all over him. He probably wouldn’t say anything if she did, but she was stubborn and refused to make him go through the rest of the day smelling like stomach acid after he’d worked so hard to get them this far in the festival. They met the

medbots at the edge of the feld and she collapsed gratefully onto the stretcher.

“Ugh.” Ochako groaned loudly. “Do you think Recovery Girl would remove my stomach if I asked? I can just photosynthesize. Get energy from the sun or something.”

Katsuki snorted, “Pretty sure that’s not how it works, cheeks, but if anyone could find a way to do it, it would be you.”

She rolled over and glared at him half-heartedly, “Don’t get my hopes up.”

Katsuki laughed, but followed along beside her as the med bots took her to Recovery Girl. They met Iida on their way and he rushed to meet them as soon as he caught her eye, “Uraraka! Are you alright?!”

“I’m fine Iida.” Ochako gave him a tired smile. “I just overused my quirk a little.”

Iida didn’t relax, he never really *relaxed,* but he did seem slightly less worried, “That is a relief. I suppose I’m just a bit on edge at the moment. What with your fight, and that general education student forfeiting, not to mention seeing Kaminari with that vigliante and whatever is going on with my brother…”

Katsuki interrupted suddenly, “What did you just say?”

Iida blinked, “I said that today has been a little odd, so I was understandably more concerned….”

Katsuki held a hand up, “No, after that. What did you say about a vigilante with Kaminari?”

“Oh, I saw Kaminari and Viridian earlier.” Iida said. “Aizawa captured him and mentioned something about him joining the class, but my brother is always saying how slippery that particular vigilante is...are you alright?”

Katsuki pinched the bridge of his nose, looking absolutely pissed, “He was here?”

“He still is.” Iida frowned. “Or at least I believe so. He was going to contact my brother and I believe got roped into playing support during a villain fight.”

“Of course he did.” Katsuki started gumbing under his breath and even with how close she was to him, Ochako could only catch part of what he said. “Fucking idiot…if you ask for someone’s number, you call them, you don’t….just asking to get captured at this point…actually crazy?”

“Um, Katsuki?” Ochako touched his arm, making him startle. “Is everything alright.”

Katsuki took a deep breath, “Don’t worry about it cheeks. Glasses, can you make sure she makes it to Recovery Girl ok? I gotta go yell at someone.”

“Alright?” Iida looked confused but dutifully took Katsuki’s place as her side as he ran off down the hall, “Do you know what that was about?”

“Not sure.” Ochako said slowly. “But he was talking to a friend earlier, so maybe…it’s probably best not to question it too much.”

Iida nodded, chopping the air, “I agree. We must respect our classmate’s privacy!”

Still, Ochako couldn’t get it off her mind as Recovery Girl checked her out. She was so preoccupied that she didn’t even get the chance to ask Hagakure how she’d gotten injured, even though she was in the bed right next to her and she had plenty of opportunities. Katsuki had referred to his friend from earlier as *Izuku*…

Did Katsuki know Viridian?

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: June 28, 2021 (MDT)

Victory

Chapter Summary

The sports Festival begins to wind down

Chapter Notes

I am too tired to link stuff today. You'll get it Friday.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Kuro...Kumo.... *Oboro* was in so much pain. Years of erased memories rushed through his brain in seconds, destroying everything in their path like a flash flood. All those experiments, finding a lost kitten in the rain and showing up to school soaked, the neverending lineup of doomed cellmates, all of it felt so overwhelming and wrong but at the same time, it was *right.* The plot holes in his life, the things that had never made sense while helping Shigaraki or while undergoing the doctor's experiments, suddenly made sense. His memories knit together like a patchwork quilt that was just as comforting as it was suffocating.

The brainwashing kid that had fought All for One *and won,* at least twice if Oboro was correct, was lying on the floor after being violently tossed from his brain by the sheer pain of all those memories returning, but with as much as he felt for the kid, Oboro couldn't' help but feel grateful, because whatever had thrown out the kid had also forced out All for One. For the first time in more than ten years, his mind was his own again.

Or, well, his and his head friends. That was going to take some getting used to.

Oboro hadn't been that aware of what happened before the fight. The Kurogiri part of him had been too focused on his mission, first on finding Viridian and then on fighting the brainwasher, that he hadn't paid much mind to the heroes that had come to fight him, with the exception of Eraserhead…

Oboro's eyes widened and his head jerked up to look at the heroes, *his friends,* finally feeling enough like himself that the mist retreated until it was just on his head like it was in highschool, just this time pitch black instead of pure white, "Shouta? Hizashi? Nemuri? Uh...long time no see?"

Nedzu observed the fight, baiting and leading Shigaraki around the stadium so that he didn't cause a hazard to civilians or any load bearing walls. Still, the damage was significant and if Shigaraki had had any backup at all, Nedzu would have been extremely concerned for the structural integrity of the building. As it was though, the heroes may not have made much progress in capturing him, but he also hadn't made much progress with killing them, so Nedzu considered it an even match for the moment.

As it turned out, that moment wasn't very long.

Nedzu's fur stood on end and he looked around, trying to figure out what had just triggered such an intense fear response. A man he'd never seen before was striding toward them with purpose and fire in both his eyes and his hands. It appeared that Shigaraki's backup had arrived. Nedzu's eyes flitted about the hall, ready to give the order to close the festival down and evacuate when he realized that the man, who was almost completely covered in scars, wasn't glaring down the heroes. No, he only had eyes for the villain, which made Nedzu wonder just *whose* backup had just arrived.

Even Shigaraki stopped fighting for a moment, staring at Dabi curiously as he bowled right up to them, "Who are you? An NPC or maybe an alley? You're definitely not a hero."

"Neither are you." The stranger replied. "Call me Dabi."

"Nice to meet you Dabi." Shigaraki grinned. "I'm Tomura Shigaraki."

Dabi raised one eyebrow, "Are you a part of the group that killed Endeavor?"

Shigaraki's grin got even wider, "That was just a warm-up! We're gonna kill All Might too!"

Dabi nodded slowly, partially turning away before winding his arm back and punching Shigaraki straight in the jaw as hard as he could, knocking that stupid grin off his face in process.Shigaraki stumbed back, a look of enraged betrayl on his face, "What the hell are you doing you cheating little troll?!"

Dabi glared at Shigaraki as he advanced, "You talk like a gamer, do you know what kill stealing is?"

Shigaraki scoffed and lunged forward, "Of course I know what that is,

I hate it!”

Dabi grabbed his wrists and lit his hands on fire, “So do I.”

“You know Viridian.” Ingenium panted. “Between you and Stain, I’m really starting to wonder if speed quirks are all they’re cracked up to be. How are you both so fast?!

“Uh…” Izuku shrugged helplessly. “I mostly just had to run away a lot…”

“He’s getting more desperate.” Crawler dodged another swipe of Stain’s Katana. “ He’s practically hysterical at this point, which makes him dangerous and unpredictable.”

“If we could fight him in ideology instead of physically,” Izuku mused. “We might be able to…”

A yell made him jump a foot in the air and almost slam his laptop shut in a panic, “You fucking idiot. I can’t believe you! Just what the hell do you think you’re doing?!”

“Hi Kacchan...” Izuku smiled sheepishly, “um...congratulations on winning the first two rounds?”

Kacchan just glared at him, “Don’t try to flatter your way out of this. Do you *want* to get caught? Because showing up to a stadium full of pro-heroes…”

“There was a villain!” Izuku defefended stubbornly. “I needed to save her hostage and…”

“And you had to shove yourself headfirst into the lion’s den to do that?!” Kacchan pulled at his hair, “Seriously, I just don’t get you sometimes, you say you’re not ready to get caught yet, but then you go and do shit like this.”

“Did you say Kacchan?” Ingenium interrupted. “As in the informant that Stain is obsessed with? Is he there with you?”

Izuku’s eyes widened, “Are there any speakers nearby that I could connect to their audio?”

“What the fuck are you talking about?” Kacchan complained. “Are you even listening to what I’m saying right now?”

“Yeah…” Izuku replied absently. “Uh, but…”

Kacchan scoffed, “Of course you’re not. Really, you are seriously the most stubborn person I know and that’s saying something considering that you’ve met my old hag!”

“Our support vehicles have speakers.” Crawler pointed out. “At least one of the trucks should be close by now. Whatever you're gonna do, kid, just hurry it up already!”

Izuku muttered to himself as his fingers flew across the keyboard, “Ok, yeah, that one’ll be pretty much at the fight by the time I can connect to the audio...and if we...Ok, Kacchan, are you ready?”

“Ready for what?” Kacchan rolled his eyes. “If you’re gonna completely ignore me and then ask for my help, you may as well actually tell me what I”m doing.”

Izuku turned bright red, “Oh...sorry. Um, Ingenium and Crawler are fighting Stian, but they need a distraction.”

Katsuki nodded, rolling his eyes, “So you need me to annoy the shit out of a serial killer?”

“Um…” Izuku winced. “Yeah?”

Katsuki scoffed, “Thank God. I’ve been wanting to give that asshole an earful since last time. Well, what are you waiting for? Hurry up!”

“Ok!” Izuku squeaked and jumped back to his keyboard, hacking the speakers as quickly as he could, sighing in relief when the timing worked out and he got control right as the truck was approaching the alley, “Ok, we’re connected. Go.”

Kacchan took a deep breath, “Stain, you motherfucking idiot! I thought you were learning, but apparently you’re still just a moron who’s never even developed common sense about not judging a book by it’s cover!”

The truck slammed on it’s brakes at the unexpected sound and Ingenium sounded like he was holding back laughter, but it *worked.* Stain stumbled and started looking around, “kacchan? What are you doing here? You are not among those who need to be culled today.”

“Yeah, well neither is Ingenium.” Kacchan argued. “But nice to know you still remember me, considering that you’re most of the reason I’m

stuck with this cutesy-ass nickname."

"A true hero must be constantly reminded of their lofty goals." Stain insisted, still looking around for Katsuki, "If you were truly trying to…"

Stain never got the chance to voice his judgement. Kacchan had done his job well and by the time he noticed Ingenium and Crawler's pincer attack, it was already too late to evade it. He went down like a rock and both heroes immediately started clearing him of all his weapons while the sidekicks in the support truck came rushing to help them restrain him. Izuku sat back and exhaled slowly. He did it.

"Thanks for the assist, Viridian." Ingenium said. "You're gonna make one hell of a hero when you go legit."

Izuku blinked in surprise, torn between a warm fuzzy feeling of pride and a sense of guilt for somehow fooling another pro hero, "Um...thanks, but that's not really, uh, in the cards for me."

"Don't sell yourself short, kid." Crawler said. "It'll be nice to have some more vigilante representation!"

"Oh…" Izuku's stomach twisted. "Well, uh…"

"Oi! Crueller dude!" Kacchan cut in. "What made you decide to be a hero?"

"Come on, I thought we were past the point of messing up my name." Crawler whined. "And do you mean like a legal hero or just someone who saves people? Because for me those were two different things."

Kacchan rolled his eyes, despite the fact that Crawler could only hear his voice, but it came across just fine in his tone, "I mean the getting the license part, obviously. What made the difference?"

"Uh..well…it was kinda that, give up or go to jail?" Crawler shrugged sheepishly. "There were some villains and things kinda came to a head so I couldn't keep being a vigilante forever. It's not really a permanent gig. It's great while it lasts, but eventually, we all have to move on and move onto bigger and better things, right? It's just kinda how life works."

Izuku had a lump in his throat as he hurried to end the call, "Well, uh, I'm glad I could help. Congrats on catching the hero killer!"

Kacchan shot Izuku a look as he slammed the laptop closed, “See?”

Izuku shook his head frantically, “It’s different for Crawler, Kacchan. He could have been a hero from the start, I…”

“Could have been a hero from the start too if everyone around you hadn’t been idiots.” Kacchan Insisted. “Come on, you damn nerd. Haven't you run enough yet?”

Izuku packed up his laptop and turned away, “Not quite.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: July 2, 2021 (MDT)

Weight

Chapter Summary

Well, the most interesting fights are still behind the scenes.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Mintii
Mayday(Orbit)
(mae) hugs for all
Regular Ċøƒƒɔęę
SoberOmbre
Thecatleader | Frog Artist X X X X
Shadow
AndyCandy
Im totally a B E E
Zehé
Scar

Memes at the End.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shouta's jaw dropped as he stared at Oboro, who was waving awkwardly at them. Apparently it was one thing to intellectually know that Kurogiri was his old friend, but it was another thing to actually see it. Mic was the first to recover from the shock and he threw himself at Oboro, wrapping his arms around him like he'd never let him go again. Shouta activated his quirk to make sure Mic didn't break the whole stadium down around them.

"You're back! It's you! You're actually back!" Mic froze and pulled away, his hands on Oboro's shoulders. "Wait, you *are* back, aren't you? This isn't some trick and the brainwashing's still there, is it?"

"Gee, I hope not." Oboro looked almost nauseous. "Um, kid? You did break the brainwashing, didn't you?"

Shinso groaned and rolled over onto his back, "Not intentionally. Pain breaks mind control and apparently you had a lot more memories to get back than the other guy. You could've warned me."

"The other guy?" Oboro frowned and then his eyebrows shot up.

“Wait, are you talking about Ogawa?! I thought he was dead!”

“Nope.” Shinso groaned. “But you will be if you don’t stop talking. You gave me a migraine.”

Oboro winced, “Oh, sorry. But, uh, are you feeling well enough to check if All for One is still, um...in control?”

Shinso cracked one eye open, “If I do, will you let me sleep?”

“We’ll take you straight to Recovery Girl.” Midnight offered. “You deserve it.”

Shinso nodded, “Ok. What’s your name again?”

“Well, uh...I’ve had a couple…” Oboro began awkwardly, trailing off when he fell under Shinso’s control.

Shinso sat still for a long moment, but Shouta didn't dare interrupt him. Worst case scenario was that he was fighting All for One again, which hopefully the kid would be able to handle, but that was a lot of pressure to put on a kid who wasn’t even officially in the hero course yet. After a long moment, Shinso sighed, “Break any remaining connection with all brainwashers except for me.”

“So he *was* still there.” Mic observed sadly.

Shinso glared tiredly at him, “No. But better safe than sorry. There’s always the chance he was trying to minimize his presence and hide from me or something, so I figured I’d give the order. It’ll give you peace of mind or whatever. Now can you shake him or something? I’m tired.”

Midnight grabbed Oboro’s shoulder and shook him awake. He blinked a few times before his eyes filled with tears, “I’m free, guys. *I’m free.”*

“Yeah, you are.” Shouta said softly, grabbing Shinso by the arm and pulling him too his feet. “Now let’s get you both to Recovery Girl.”

Denki really hoped that Izuku was alright. From what he’d understood before he’d had to run off and actually fight in the sports festival, Izuku’s plan to use Ingenium as a distraction to let him escape had worked a little *too* well, considering that Denki was pretty sure he was fighting the hero killer right now? Izuku was the smartest person Denki knew, but that sometimes flew right out the window when he

got too focused on something and saving people apparently took a lot of focus. But as amazing as it was to watch Izuku in the zone, when he got like that, he didn't have the mental energy left to worry about small details.

For example, getting arrested.

Hopefully it wouldn't be a big deal. Denki's classmates had been pretty nice so far, so he *hoped* they would at least give Izuku a chance, but there was a reason Izuku had so much trouble trusting new people, especially when it came to his quirklessness. The truth was that a lot of the time people just sucked and even more often, people repeated dumb opinions without really knowing the truth, so as much as Denki wanted to believe that all of his classmates would be super supportive, he knew better than to trust them before they'd proven themselves. They'd get a chance to do just that a little later, assuming that Izuku didn't actually manage to pull a Houdini and escape again.

It was hard for Denki to focus on the sports festival now that he knew what was going on behind the scenes. Half of him wanted to go visit Hagakure in Recovery Girl's office, but how would he even begin that conversation?

Hey, sorry I kinda killed you. Glad you have a heartbeat.

Yeah...maybe he should wait until Aizawa or someone could go with him. He hadn't really had the time to process the fact taht he'd just killed someone and brought them back to life and at this point he was honestly just avoiding thinking about it. It was easier to just pretend that this was a normal sports festival just like any other and his biggest concern was how to beat his next opponent. He'd already won his first and second fights, though he felt a little bad about beating Tokoyami so quickly. He hadn't tried to! But then he'd noticed how Dark Shadow was shying away from his electricity and before he knew it he was pressing that advantage for all it was worth, just like Izuku had taught him. It was awesome, but Tokoyami had a really cool quirk and Denki wished he'd let them show off a little more.

Uraraka had managed to beat Kirishima last round by repeatedly removing his gravity and letting him fall until his hardening couldn't keep up, so she was his next opponent. He'd kinda missed her fight with Bakugo, but he'd heard a bunch of their classmates talking about it and he was starting to get excited to see who would win. It was definitely going to be a challenge.

He was walking from the prep room down toward the field when he caught sight of All Might wandering around in his smaller form. Denki grinned and waved, making sure no one else was around before calling out to him, “Hey All Might! How are you liking the fights?”

It wasn’t until All Might did a double take and started coughing up blood that Denki remembered he’d never actually seen small might outside of the headspace. Oops.

“Well, uh...this is awkward. I mean, not because you’re awkward, but because I’m awkward. I mean, I guess you didn’t tell me about the whole shapeshifting thing but I knew it from your ghost. Not that you’re dead, because you’re obviously not, but uh, you’re dead to me? No!” Denki should probably shut up now, why was he still talking? “What I’m trying to say is that the version of you in my head is different? Not, like, the imaginary version, but like the quirk version? Sorry, I had to kill someone today, so I guess I’m a little off…”

Denki winced as All Might started coughing again, “My boy, what did you just say?”

“Uh, I had to kill someone.” Denki winced. “But it was only temporary! She was queen bee’s host and that was the only way to save her, but we did, so it’s all fine!”

All Might looked at him with concern, “Are *you* fine? You’re rambling about ghosts and death and…”

“Oh, that was just uh….” Denki chuckled awkwardly. “You know the vestiges? You know the shadowy little versions of the past holders that you can talk to? It was just those.”

All Might blinked, “You can communicate with those?”

Denki slumped, “Oh yeah, they said that wasn’t normal. Sorry.”

“No need to apologize, my boy.” All Might still looked mostly alarmed, but he patted Denki on the shoulder anyway. “Just remember that if you ever need to talk, I am here!”

Denki giggled, “Ok, All Might. Wish me luck! Plus Ultra!”

All Might smiled fondly, “Plus Ultra, my boy.”

Dabi knew he was being an idiot. Going full on revenge vigilante in

the middle of a stadium full of heroes was a terrible idea, but here he was, doing it anyway. This Shigaraki guy probably wasn't even the guy who'd signed Endevor's death sentence, but just the connection was enough to make the blisters on his arms all the more satisfying.

"Rat! Traitor! You little..." Shigaraki hissed with pain and clawed blindly at Dabi, disintegrating part of his sleeve, which made Dabi shove him away on instinct. He didn't want to be anywhere near those hands if he could help it.

Some of the heroes tired to interfere, but Shigaraki disintegrated a part of the floor so they couldn't reach. It wouldn't hold them back for long, considering that one of the heroes was Rock Lock, but Dabi could finish this quickly, "Endeavor was mine to kill. You took away my revenge!"

"Oh, so the number two hero didn't save you from your daddy beating your ass. Boo hoo." Shigaraki snarled. "What could that bastard have even done to you to make you so freaking obsessed that you have to kill him yourself?!"

"Well, you said it yourself." Dabi smirked, the expression tearing at his staples, but he ignored it. "Daddy dearest beat my ass. What? You didn't think it was weird they never found the body of Endeavor's oldest kid?"

Shigaraki reared back in shock and Dabi used the opening to trap him against the wall with a strong burst of flames. Shigaraki stepped back against the wall protectively, looking around for any opening and then grinning when his eyes caught on something behind Dabi's back, "Kurogiri! Get us out of here!"

Dabi whirled around, ready to fry whoever this Kurogiri guy was to a crisp, but the only newcomers he saw were Eraser and a few other heroes. Eraser was holding up Kacchan's friend, letting him lean on his shoulder as they hobbled along, and there was some guy with them that he'd never seen before with misty hair about the same color as Dabi's own scars. He must be Kurogiri, but instead of jumping to Shigaraki's aid, he looked conflicted.

After a moment, Kurogiri turned away, "I'm sorry, Tomura. I have to give the heroes a chance to save you too."

Dabi grinned and turned back to Shigaraki, who looked shocked, betrayed, and even devastated as whoever this ally was turned on him. Honestly, it was almost better than killing him like Dabi had had

in mind. Then again, why couldn't he have both? Dabi shot forward another burst of flames before Rock Lock showed up behind him and locked him in place. Right before the flames reached him, Shigaraki's expression hardened and he touched the wall behind him.

"Eraserhead, Rock Lock! Stop him!" Nedzu's voice was actually laced with a slight amount of panic. "That wall is load bearing!"

Chapter End Notes

Memes
X X X

Semi-finals

Chapter Summary

The big question now is: where is Viridian?

Chapter Notes

Art!
VDuck *quacks*
froggers (she/they)
liquid_water
KatDaWeirdo
|•Smoked._.salmoN•|

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Denki cracked his knuckles as he grinned at Uraraka, “As much as I’d like to let a pretty girl make me float away, I’m kinda gonna have to stay grounded. Nothing personal.”

Uraraka rolled her eyes, “I’m sure, just like it’ll be nothing personal when I float you right out of the ring.”

Denki’s grin got a bit wider and he glanced over toward Cementoss, who should have already called the start of the match already. What was taking so long? Denki’s smile fell when he realized that Cementoss wasn’t looking at them. He was focused on listening to his comms and if Denki didn’t know better, he’d say that Cementoss was worried about something.

After another moment, Cementoss swallowed and took a deep breath as he turned to the crowd, “There will be a brief delay before the next match. Uraraka, Kaminari, come with me.”

Denki and Uraraka looked at each other before hurrying after Cementoss into the tunnels. The crowd was already rumbling with mutters and whispered as people wondered what was going on and Denki was kinda in the same boat. This couldn’t have anything to do with Izuku, they wouldn’t have stopped the sports festival for a vigilante, but Izuku wouldn’t have stopped fighting Queen Bee unless the fight was completely over and the hero killer fight was all the way

in Hosu with Iida's brother.

"What's going on?" Uraraka asked once they were out of sight. "Kacchan said there might be a villain attack of some sort."

"There was, but it ended before the third round." Denki cut in. "Unless there's another one?"

Cementoss sighed, "The villain factory, or the league of villains as you know them Uraraka, was attempting to retaliate against us for taking down one of their own. Both villains have been stopped, but...well, you'll see."

Cementoss picked up the pace, breaking into a jog and leading them through the maze of tunnels until they reached a seemingly normal hallway that was currently in complete chaos, "I'm here and I brought the kids. I figured their quirks would be useful."

Nedzu nodded, his fur on end, "Perfect. Kaminari, you can use your electricity to give others a second wind, correct? I observed you doing so during the entrance exam."

"Uh, kinda?" Denki responded nervously. "I mean, it's mostly for muscle soreness, but…"

"But it's worth a try." Rock Lock Grit out. "Use it on me, kid."

Denki's eyes widened, "Are you holding up a whole entire wall with your quirk?"

"Death arms is helping too." Aizawa explained. "But Shigaraki was desperate and that made his quirk spread faster than normal. We need to keep the wall in place for long enough to evacuate the student section right above us."

"Wait, our classmates are up there?!" Uraraka cried out. "Uh...I can help. I'll remove as much gravity as I can."

Nedzu nodded, "Good. Shirakumo, if you would be able to help her get high enough to be effective?"

A man with shadowy black hair that Denki didn't recognize nodded, "Sure...Uh, I'm not really sure my clouds support weight anymore, I'll have to figure that out later, but I can get her up there for sure."

Denki almost screamed as Shirakumo made a portal just like one of

Kurogiri's, "Uh, I thought you arrested the villains."

"Nah, just took them down." Shinso said. "Kurogiri was being brainwashed, hence the weirdness. And if the whole thing with Rock Lock works, can you do something about my migraine."

Denki's mouth was dry, but he nodded as he ran toward Rock Lock, "I can try. Let's, uh, let's stop wasting time ok?"

He vaguely heard Uraraka double checking that the portals were safe, but Denki was too focused on using his quirk on Rock Lock, focusing on blocking the pain signals and hoping that would help with quirk exhaustion as well, "Ok, that's about all I know to do, is it better?"

Rock Lock noded tiredly, "A little. It's probably gonna wear off quick, huh?"

"Yeah, it just kinda takes away the symptoms, it doesn't fix the problems." Denki apologized. "Shinso, you ready?"

Shinso winced and nodded, "Something tells me I'm gonna need to brainwash some more idiots if we want to use Kurogiri's portals to warp everyone to safety. Do your worst."

Denki nodded and used his quirk on Shinso as Uraraka hurried through a portal at ground level and came out near the ceiling, canceling the ceiling's gravity with a yelp before Shirakumo caught her and she landed harmlessly back on the ground, already looking green, "I don't think I can actually hold um a whole building for very long."

"You only need to hold it long enough for me to fix the wall." Cementoss said calmly. "Eraser, you and the others focus on evacuating the students."

Aizawa nodded in confirmation, "Come on Shinso, let's go. Kaminari, I trust you know how to find your boyfriend?"

Denki went red, "Uh, um, I mean, I…"

"Make sure he's safe." Aizawa cut him off. "This entire attack was revenge and he was the target."

Shouto wasn't even surprised when Midnight came to their booth and told them to gather up their things and come with her immediately.

Of course Touya would do stomthing stupid enough to force them to actually evacuate. They could hear 1B evacuating beside them as as well and then they saw Shinso and Aizawa waiting for them in the hall right before a black portal engulfed all of them and suddenly they were in one of the prep rooms with Present Mic and a guy who looked like he was a less creepy version of Kurogiri.

Mic grinned at them, “Hey listeners! This might take a little bit of explanation.”

“Come on, pickup.” Denki couldn’t stop fidgeting as the phone kept ringing. He’d run around the entire stadium what felt like three times now trying to find Izuku and he didn’t even know if he had his phone on him when he was out doing vigilante stuff, but it was the only thing he could think to do. What if Izuku didn’t answer? What if there were more than the two villains that attacked and they’d nabbed him or worse? What if he was hurt somewhere and refusing to get help because he thought other people deserved it more? What if…

“Hey Denks!” Izuku picked up. “What’s up?”

Denki practically melted with relief, “Oh thank god, where are you right now?”

Izuku sounded confused, “Um, almost home? I wasn’t quite sure where Eraser went, and I figured I wasn’t going to get a better chance to run, so when I finished I just said bye to Kacchan and got out of there as fast as I could. Why? Is something wrong?”

“NOpe!” Denki winced as he realized he answered way too quickly. “NOthing’s wrong. There’s no villains, no walls are coming down. Everything’s fine!”

“Denki…” Izuku asked suspiciously. “Do I need to turn around and come back?”

“No!” Denki yelled. “Anything but that.”

“Denki, what’s going on?” Izuku demanded. “You’re acting off.”

Denki bit his lip, “Ok, so apparently the villain factory wasn’t very happy about you taking down queen bee and they sent Shigaraki and Kurogiri here to...uh...take revenge?”

“What?!” Izuku squeaked. “I...I’ll be right there, I can’t let people get

hurt because…"

"But everything's fine! They caught them and Nedzu and the other heroes have it under control, it's just that Shigaraki disintegrated a part of the stadium, so we're having to evacuate the part right above it, but Cementoss is already fixing it, so it's fine!"

"Still…" Izuku sounded like he was beating himself up again. "If they were there for me, I can at least help rescue…"

"No, you need to stay as far away as possible." Denki said. "If they send more reinforcements…"

"Then they'll need someone to fight them." Izuku said. "I know they've got heroes, but…"

Denki's face twisted sadly as Izuku started muttering. He wasn't going to be able to convince him to protect himself, but maybe he would be more willing to protect other people, "Izu...Viri. If you're still here, the villains will come to fight you, but if they can't find you, then there's no point in sending people here. Take off your vigilante gear, go home, and disappear for a little bit. That's the best way to keep everyone here safe, ok?"

When Izuku didn't respond, Denki pressed a little harder, "Please. Just stay away. Do it for me. Please?"

There were still a few seconds of hesitation, "You'll call me if you need me?"

Denki nodded, "Of course. You'll be the first back-up I call if things go more wrong then they've already gone."

"Ok.." Izuku said softly. "I'll be watching to make sure you're safe, but I'll disappear. That's what's best for everyone."

Denki nodded and hung up the phone. At least Izuku would stay away and stay safe for now. He heard something behind him and saw Uraraka walking toward him, "Hey, Uraraka! Did Cementoss fix the wall?"

Uraraka nodded, still looking slightly nauseous, "Yeah. We're not gonna put anyone back in those sections, but the stadium's not coming down anymore,s o that's a good thing. Midnight said to come fight you so we can actually do our fight."

Denki did a double take, “They still want us to finish the sports festival? Are you up to that? You were holding up, like, an entire building.”

Uraraka rolled her eyes, “Part of a building. And they gave me a choice, but I want to do it. The point of today is to push ourselves anyway, right? And even if I lose, I know I’m a hero because we just helped save people from real villains. It doesn’t matter who wins, it’s just for fun and to show the villains they can’t break us.”

Denki gave her a small smile, “I guess that’s a good way to see it. Come on. I still have to wipe the floor with you.”

Uraraka laughed and jogged toward the field, “You’re on.”

Izuku was tense and exhausted by the time he walked in the front door, all of his vigilante gear shoved down into the bottom of his bag. He took off his shoes and wanted nothing more than to just collapse onto the bed and sleep, but he was too keyed up and he needed to watch the rest of the festival so he could make sure everyone was safe.

“Izuku?” Mom jumped to her feet as soon as he came into the living room. “Are you ok? I was so worried when you just ran out of here like that.”

“Sorry Mom.” Izuku let her hug him and forced a small smile onto his face. “I’d just, uh...forgotten to wish Denki luck. Plus I wanted to give him some tips for the later rounds and stuff, but I’m back now!”

Mom shook her head fondly, “You could have just texted him.”

“You know how quirks are.” Izuku chuckled. “It’s hard to explain things over text!”

Mom sighed, “well, did you do what you needed to?”

Izuku frowned. “Mostly? I need to watch the rest of the sports festival though, just to make sure that everything is actually said...to make sure that Denki understood everything. Yeah. “

Mom’s expression softened, “”Well then, you showed up just in time. They’re about to restart the matches.”

Warning bells sounded in Izuku’s brain, “Restart?”

Mom nodded, “They had to stop the matches for some reason about 15 minutes ago, but Kaminari’s just about to fight that girl Katsuki was working with during the first few rounds!”

Izuku hesitantly sat on the couch and watched the match. It wasn’t a very flashy fight, definitely not the kind that the marketing teams would love, but if someone knew how to fight, it was even more impressive. Denki was showing off all the hand-to-hand skills in his arsenal as he tried to touch Uraraka, who was dodging every hit while looking for an opening of her own and trying to distract Denki so that she could float him before he shocked her. Uraraka was slowing down fast though and it looked like she was about to throw up a couple times, so it didn’t take long for her to trip up and Denki didn’t hesitate. He stunned her immediately, throwing her over his shoulder as soon as she seized up and carrying her over to the edge of the ring before dropping her onto the other side. It wasn’t the flashiest way to end a fight, but Izuku grinned. Any hero worth their salt would recognize the amount of strength, skill, and quirk control it took to pull off a move like that! Denki was going to get so many internship offers, Izuku couldn’t wait.

During the other semi-final match, Izuku paid more attention to the background than to the match itself. There was a section of the stadium that was empty, so it must have been evacuated at one point, but the cameras were doing their best not to call attention to it. Other than that, the pros looked like they had been on high alert but were starting to calm down, so Izuku decided to trust that Denki had been telling the truth and that it was safest for everyone if he just layed low. It looked like the best thing he could do was just sit down and enjoy watching Denki fight like he’d originally planned. Izuku smiled as Eraser announced the final match. It looked like everything was finally back to normal.

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: July 9, 2021 (MDT)

Finality

Chapter Summary

The sports festival conclusion.

Chapter Notes

Art!
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Lore
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ThatsSo***Yikes***
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Mintii

Memes!
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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shouto tried not to look if Dabi was back in the stands, but ended up glancing toward where Fuyumi and Natsuo were sitting before he could help himself. He wasn't there, so either he'd gotten himself killed, arrested, or distracted and Shouto couldn't care less which one. Obviously. Why should he care about what happened to the long lost brother who never even bothered to reach out and then immediately did nothing but be annoying as soon as he was back in their lives? Still, Fuyumi and Natsuo wouldn't take it well if he died, so hopefully he'd just gotten bored and gone back to wherever he was sitting originally. Just for their sakes, not his. Obviously.

Kaminari hadn't spent nearly any time with the class since the second round, so if he'd spent that whole time running around, he had to be getting tired by now. Not that Shouto thought he would need that advantage to beat him, but it couldn't hurt. Kaminari was one of the strongest students in their class, so it wouldn't be wise to underestimate him.

Midnight was back to overseeing the matches now, and she cracked

her whip as she called the beginning of the match, “I want to see both of you showing off the potential of youth this round, is that clear? Begin!”

Right off the bat, Shouto started with an ice attack, but Kaminari quickly melted his way out with just the heat of his electricity. This needed to be a ranged fight and Shouto wasn’t an idiot, so he’d made sure that he wasn’t carrying any metal when he walked out onto the field, taking away any opportunity for Kaminari wouldn’t be able to use his magnetism to bring him into close range. Shouto’s strength was long range fighting, so this was his fight and he was going to win it without using his father’s fire.

Shouto kept throwing up icewalls as Kaminari tried to get closer, but he kept melting them as fast as Shouto could make them. Thanks to the ice walls, Kaminari hadn’t gotten farther than a few feet closer to him, but he didn’t look rushed at all and it was throwing Shouto off. He should want to end the fight quickly, shouldn’t he? The longer the fight went on, the more tired he’d get and the more likely it was that he would get frozen by Shouto’s ice. So why didn’t he seem concerned?

“You sure you wanna keep doing this, Man?” Kaminari yelled. “It doesn’t take a whole lot of electricity to create heat like this, so I’m good to do this all day. You’re gonna reach your quirk’s limit *way* before I will if we keep going like this and I kinda want a fair fight, dude, if it’s all the same to you.”

Shouto froze. So *that* was why he wasn’t in a rush. He was planning on going until Shouto passed out from hypothermia, which would happen long before Kaminari generated enough electricity to overload his brain, unless…Shouto shook the thought from his head and hardened his determination. He wasn’t going to use his old man’s quirk. It didn’t matter that the bastard was dead, Shouto could do this with just his mother’s power, but he’d have to kick it up a notch.

He made as big a glacier as he could without overdoing it. His breath came out in a large white cloud, but it would be worth it if he’d caught Kaminari…which he hadn’t, apparently, considering that his opponent was currently waving at him from the very top of the mountain he’d just created.

“That was really cool!” Kaminari grinned. “I wasn’t sure I’d be able to stay in bounds if I used the stadium as a magnetic anchor, but I had to try, right, especially with an awesome move you just pulled. Your

quirk is super powerful, dude."

Shouto felt a brief sense of pride until something occurred to him. It *wasn't* his quirk, it was his mothers...unless his fire wasn't his fathers. Just like Dabi had said, the bastard was dead and he hadn't seen his mom in years. He was so far removed from his parents that neither quirk had anything to do with them anymore, and he couldn't say that his ice was his quirk without saying that his fire was as well. Why was he still letting those ghosts hold him back?

Kaminari was sliding down the side of the glacier now and Shouto found the corners of his mouth twitching upwards as he realized that by landing on top of the iceberg, Kaminari had put himself in a vulnerable position. Shouto could *win* this.

He just had to use his fire.

He'd just been planning on melting the glacier and sending Kaminari on a knock-out drop to the ground, but instead, the stadium *exploded.* Shouto's eyes widened and he cut off his quirk. Was kaminari ok? He hadn't hurt anyone, had he?

The smoke felt like it took forever to clear, but when it did, Kaminari was unconscious and lying outside the ring. There was a long moment of loud silence before the stadium erupted into cheers.

"Denki Kaminari is out of bounds." Midnight announced. "Shouto Todoroki wins the Sports Festival!"

Shouta tugged at his collar as Nedzu pulled aside the curtain leading to the stage, "This is going to be a nightmare."

Nedzu's smile was tight, "Yes, it is. You remember how to spin the events, correct?"

Shouta nodded and Nedzu walked through the gap in the curtains, Shouta following close behind alongside several other heroes and teachers. The assembled reporters were already shouting questions, but they ignored them as they sat down at the long table. Nedzu cleared his throat and after a minute, the reporters calmed down enough for them to begin.

"I have invited you here tonight to answer your questions about the incident that occured this afternoon during the first year's sports festival." Nedzu began, conveniently forgetting to mention that there

had been at least *three* separate incidents, at the least. “After the attack at the USJ, we had been expecting such a move and were more than prepared with enough security and heroes to be able to withstand such an attack.”

A reporter’s hand shot up, “So it *was* the same villains that attacked the USJ?”

“It was the group that announced themselves at the USJ as the league of villains, yes.” Shouta answered. “However their numbers were decimated during the previous attack and they only sent two members, planning on using their powerful quirks to cause as much destruction as possible before fleeing. As said previously, we were prepared for such a move and were able to capture both villains quickly before they became a threat to the stadium as a whole.”

“But you still chose not to evacuate.” Another reporter accused. “Why?”

“The logistics of so many people meant that the attack would have already ended by the time the evacuation even began.” Midnight said calmly. “And evacuation comes with risks of its own, including an increased chance of someone being trampled in the inevitable panic. It is standard protocol in large events like these to only evacuate the affected areas to prevent unnecessary worry and injury, which we did as soon as they were in danger.”

“And what about the rumors that you allowed a vigilante into the Sports Festival?” A voice called from the back. “Can you really say you did everything you could to protect those kids when you *invited* one of the criminals?”

And this was where some *creative truths* came into play. For both their PR and to keep Viridian from being even more of a target than he already was, it was best to minimize his role in the attacks at worst and completely eliminate him from the narrative at best. Shouta took a calming breath, “While it is true that a vigilante was allowed to attend, we did not know he was a vigilante at the time.”

Confused muttereings erupted until Nedzu raised his voice above the crowd, “The vigilante in question goes by the name of Dabi, was simply a petty informant before today, when he assisted heroes and was integral in the takedown of the villain called Tomura Shigaraki.”

“And is Dabi in custody as well?” one of the reporters asked.

“Yes. He was apprehended at the same time as Shigaraki.” Rock Lock answered. “However, due to the fact that Shigaraki was not brutally injured and as gratitude for his assistance, as well as his status and training as the son of a former por hero, he will be enrolled in the Vigilante Rehabilitation Program and train to receive his licence at the next round of licensing exams.”

The crowd went crazy, just as they’d planned. Making Dabi’s identity known was a risk, but the scandal of it would take at least some of the heat off UA and let them weather the storm more effectively. Shouta didn’t wait for the roar to die down before he started talking, “when he arrived at the sports festival, Dabi, or as you may have heard of him, Touya Todoroki, was simply attending to support his little brother, Shouto Todoroki. This was why he did not set off any red flags as a vigilante: quite simply, he had not committed any acts of vigilantism prior to today.”

They were immediately barraged with a million questions about Endeavor and his family and no one thought to ask about the other vigilante that had snuck onto campus, so no one mentioned him. Shouta just hoped the kid was safe. He was good at disappearing and had gone radio silent the minute he left, but Kaminari assured him that his problem child was fine, so he just had to keep protecting him as best he could, just like he always did.

He could find the kid, hopefully. Kacchan obviously knew more than he let on, and Kaminari could probably be persuaded to slip up and give them some more hints if necessary, but the biggest hint was the Shouta was 90% sure that the kid had called him from his personal phone, so if they could track the number.

Another question pulled him from his thoughts. After this media shit-storm was over and All for One had had some time to pull himself out of whatever blind rage Queen Bee’s destruction had caused him, the first thing he’d do was track that phone and find his kid. If he did it at the beginnings of internships, he could even wrangel the kid into training alongside Shinso before he had to officially attend classes and enroll in the rehabilitation program. The plan was solid and logical, just like Shouta liked it.

He was finally going to catch his kid.

There was not a word to describe the sheer rage that All for One felt at this moment. Decades of picking the perfect players to make an

impact, years of training and brainwashing them until they were broken puppets that would play exactly the tune he gave them, buckets of money experimenting to perfect the ideal instruments to fit his symphony, all of it was gone, the magic shattered in a single moment by a goddamn solitary Kazoo.

Perhaps he wasn't thinking the most rationally at the moment. Perhaps he'd been hasty in sending Kurogiri and Shigaraki to take revenge on that meddlesome vigilante. And perhaps he'd been throwing somewhat of what lesser men would call a *tantrum* when he'd annihilated the doctor and the rest of the nomu, but he had lived long enough that he had watched the world burn and rebuild itself from the ashes even stronger, so there was no reason he could not do the same. But first, he had to eliminate the stupid, idiotic, headstrong, interrupting hooligan that he should have killed when he'd first started even *hinting* at causing problems. It was not a mistake he would make again.

Viridian might have taken away everything else, but All for One still had his reputation and his resources. All for one picked up his phone and dialed the broker. That boy would regret ever making an enemy of the Symbol of Evil.

Giran picked up on the second ring, "Sensei! To what do I owe the honor?"

"How much to arrange a kidnapping?" All for One let his rage seep into his voice and he could almost feel Giran's terror on the other end of the phone. "I want to hear Viridian scream when I kill him."

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: July 12, 2021 (MDT)

Internships

Chapter Summary

Class 1A gets ready for their internships

Chapter Notes

Art!
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RogueBEEctor

Memes!
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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hitoshi was still getting used to actually being a part of the hero course. He'd taken the seat of the invisible girl, who was apparently on an extended medical leave after several months after being possessed by a villain, which was objectively no stranger than two separate individuals being brainwashed and given multiple quirks, so Hitoshi assumed that was just kinda par for the hero course. Aizawa hadn't shown up yet, so everyone was chatting and wasting time until he crawled in with his sleeping bag a minute before the bell. HItoshi assumed it wasn't too bad as far as daily routines went.

"Uh, Todoroki?" Kaminari asked. "Why are you staring at me?"

Hitoshi glanced over and was trying to be discreet until he realized that most of the class was eavesdropping too, so if no one else was concerned about it, he wasn't going to worry too much. Todoroki was looking at Kaminari suspiciously, almost like he'd figured out something important, "Are you Viridian?"

Kaminari blinked and took a step back, "Uh...what?"

"Oh, are you talking about the theory that's been all over the internet?" Mina jumped in. "It's been everywhere!"

"Wait, what theory?" Uraraka asked. "What's going on?"

"Apparently somebody took the video of Kaminari fighting you and compared it side by side with some footage of Viridian." Jiro

explained. “I watched the analysis video, they’re like, scary similar.”

“No we’re not!” Kaminari answered quickly. “I mean I’ve got a qu...an electricity quirk and Viri doesn’t!”

“How would you know?” Sero asked. “Viridian’s quirk is still unknown, nobody has any idea what it is.”

“Uh, it’s just that he’s never…” Kaminari started.

“Kaminari doesn’t look anything like Viridian.” Hitoshi muttered.

Suddenly, everyone was looking at him and Mina came bouncing up to him in excitement, “Have you actually *met* Viridian?!”

Hitoshi leaned back slightly, “Uh, yeah. Bakugo introduced us.”

Mina turned on Kacchan like a hawk, “You’ve met Viridian and you *didn’t tell us?!”*

“If Kaminari is Viridian, then we all have.” Todoroki pointed out.”

“Guys! I’m not Viridian!” Kaminari insisted. “I don’t even know why you would think that! I’m training to be a hero, why would I need to be a vigilante?”

“You could always just be using it as extra training or something.” Uraraka grinned mischievously. “What? Are you telling us that you’re not moonlighting as a vigilante?”

“I’m not!” Kaminari squeaked. “There's a million reasons why I’m not a vigilante…”

“All of which have at least a dozen theories online explaining how you might have gotten around them.” Todoroki said. “And the fighting styles are pretty much identical…”

“Because Viridian taught Kaminari how to fight.”

The class went silent as Aizawa strode into the room, putting eyedrops in his eyes. He looked more tired than HItoshi had ever seen him, which made sense considering that the entire UA staff was constantly being bombarded by the media and even just normal civilians about the sports festival attack and on top of that he had to worry about reintroducing Kurogiri to society and all the legal issues that came with that as well as coordinate internships for all of his students. Had he even had time to eat?

Apparently not, because he pulled out some kind of jelly pouch and started opening it as he talked, “I already looked into it as early as the entrance exam and not only does Viridian not use electricity, their personalities are completely different, though it does seem they’re compatible. This theory might be new to you, but the heroes have been aware of it for quite some time and have already gathered the evidence to dismiss it. Moving right along, your internships…”

“But…!” Mina tried to interrupt, but Aizawa silenced her with a glare, turning on his quirk and staring down the rest of the class and making sure they were all behaving up to his standards before he blinked.

“As I was saying,” Aizawa began again, “your internships begin this afternoon. Several of you have chosen to intern with top ten heroes, so make sure you’re on your best behavior. Yaoyorozu, I’m not concerned, I’m sure you and Best Jeanist will get along fine. He reached out to the school personally to say he was very impressed with the individualized cheer outfits that you made for your classmates, so well done. Bakugo, could you please try not to insult Edgeshot within ten seconds of meeting him?”

“Tch.” Bakugo rolled his eyes. “Not my fault if he can’t take it, but I’ll try.”

“Please do.” Aizawa said dryly. “Now, let’s go over some ground rules.”

Hitoshi took notes on everything Aizawa said, not wanting to mess up his only chance. He was going to be meeting up with Aizawa later, but his teacher had already warned him that he might be a little late. Apparently, he was going to go track down Viridian and try to convince him to join them on patrol. Aizawa had sworn him to secrecy before admitting that he believed he had everything he needed to find Viridian’s identity, but hadn’t had a single moment since the sports festival to sit down and put everything together, so they were going to do that the second day of their internship and use it as a chance for Hitoshi to learn about information gathering and data compilation. If everything went as planned, they’d be coming back from their internships with one more student than they’d had originally.

That, of course, assumed that Viridian didn’t manage to give them the slip at the last minute, but Hitoshi wasn’t too concerned. They could always just try again. They had all the time in the world.

“Gran Torino?” Izuku frowned and pulled his laptop toward him. “I’ve never heard of him before…”

Denki chuckled and rolled his eyes, “I’ll save you a rabbit hole, he was an old mentor of All Might’s. All Might’s terrified of him, but Seven says he’s cool, just a little brutal when it comes to training. If all else fails, she can give me dirt on him.”

Izuku smiled, “As long as you’re safe and having fun. I think it’ll be really good for you to train with somebody who’s more familiar with One for All.”

“I mean I’ve already trained with a quirk expert.” Denki teased, bumping his shoulder playfully. “I wouldn’t have made it this far if you hadn’t helped me. Speaking of, everybody thinks I’m you.”

Izuku turned bright red and spluttered, “W-what? Why? How?!”

Denki laughed, “Izu, I fight just like you except for the fact that I use electricity instead of weapons. Also! I’ve been meaning to ask if you could teach me how to fight with your pipes! If I use, like, a super high conductivity metal in mine then they could extend my range and attack power and stuff.”

“But…” Izuku bit his lip. “I didn't want people connecting us, Denks, that’ll put you in danger!”

Denki squeezed his hand, “I’m a hero student. I can handle it. And it’s not like I can’t just go to the hardware store and buy some myself, you know. Wait, did I ever tell you about the betting pool we had at work about you? I totally lost, by the way, not that anyone else knows that.”

“You had a betting pool about me?!” Izuku squeaked.

“Have.” Denki grinned. “Or at least I’m pretty sure they still do, I had to quit when I got into UA, but you always bought the most random stuff, Izu! Of course all the employees would have a betting pool about what you would do with it!”

“Do I even want to know what your guess was?” Izuku asked hesitantly.

“Oh, I just thought it was some kinda sculpture or something. You seemed like the quiet, artsy type when we first met.” Denki shrugged. “One of my bosses thought you were a serial killer, though.”

Izuku snorted, “Do you really think *I* could kill anyone?”

“Only if it was the only way to save someone.” Denki shrugged. “Now Seven warned me that this Gran Torino guy was kinda a prankster, so, like, do you think I should prank him back or…?”

Izuku wasn’t quite sure what he was going to do this week. The internships were going to be so good and everyone was going to learn so much, but both Denki and Kacchan were going to be out of town and Eraser was going to be busy training Shinso, so Izuku didn’t want to get in their way. It wasn’t like it was a huge deal, he usually worked alone anyway, but there was a part of him that wished he could go on an internship too, just so he wouldn’t be left out. Maybe if he had actually let himself be caught at the sports festival…

Izuku shook his head and jumped over an alley. He wasn’t in the hero course, and probably never would be so there wasn’t really any point in wondering how his life would be different. Even if Eraser didn’t end up rejecting him the way everyone else had, the hero commission wouldn’t want a quirkless hero running around. They’d probably just find a way to sweep the entire thing under the rug and Izuku would either be forced to stop or he’d continue being a vigilante forever. That was it. That was all he could expect out of the future, because even though he could fight fairly well without a quirk, it was still a limitation that other people thought was impossible to overcome, especially during combat. Izuku had thought that he’d come to terms with the fact that he’d never be a hero, so why did watching Denki leave on his internship hurt so much?

Izuku stopped a mugging, then just crouched on a roof and watched the city for a few minutes, jumping to his feet with a start when Eraserhead landed behind him.

“You’re a little jumpy today, problem child.” Eraser said. “I haven’t seen you since the sports festival. Is something wrong?”

Izuku shook his head, “No, I was just lying low after the attack. I thought it was safer for everyone and, well, I guess I was kinda just lost in thought. How have you been, Eraser?”

“Don’t ask.” Eraser groaned. “If I never have to do another interview, I’ll die happy. I haven’t slept in three days.”

“Is that really any different from normal?” Izuku teased. “Denki told me about your sleeping bag.”

“It’s functional.” Eraser grumbled. “So, are you coming or what?”

Izuku frowned, “Coming where?”

Eraser rolled his eyes, “I’m teaching Shinso how to be an underground hero and that includes how to deal with and fight alongside vigilantes. It’s only logical to have an actual vigilante present during the lesson.”

“Oh! You actually…” Izuku swallowed his shock and smiled. He got to go on an internship! kinda. “Ok! Where is he?”

“He’s waiting for us at a rendezvous point, and don’t worry, we’re not just using this as bait to capture you.” Eraser grinned widely. “Shinso needs a little more training before he’s able to get the jump on you.”

“He’ll get there.” Izuku smiled and fell into step with Eraserhead as they ran across the rooftops. “He’s been sparring with Kacchan for a while, right? And his quirk is developing really well! It was so cool how he was able to save Ogawa and...it was Oboro, right? Kacchan told me that Shinso managed to break the brainwashing.”

Eraser nodded, “He’s still being highly guarded until we can take down the villain factory as a whole, but he remembers us now and is almost back to his old self, just with a different quirk.”

“I’m sure that’s weird.” Izuku said. “A good weird, but still weird.”

“You’ve got that right.” Aizawa sighed. “But Nedzu’s been working on the logistics of reenrolling him in the hero course somehow, maybe even through the vigilante program like you or crawler.”

Izuku’s heart clenched, “I already told you, Eraser, I can’t be a hero. I’m can't be in the vigilante program.”

Eraser just gave him a small smile, “we’ll see.”

Izuku huffed, but skidded to a stop when he heard a loud, guttural scream, “Let’s go. Or, uh, I can take care of it and meet you later? I know you’re meeting Shinso and everything, so…”

Eraserhead snorted, “I already warned him I was going to be late. Hero work comes first, kid. Lead the way.”

Izuku gave a determined nod and rushed in teh direction of the scream. He went cold as soon as he realized who was in the alley being attacked and immediately dropped down into the ally,

Eraserhead right on his tail, “Kacchan!”

“Go away, Viridian!” Kacchan snarled. “I’ve got these mother fuckers!”

The villain he was fighting wasn’t one that Izuku had ever fought before, but he was pretty sure that he recognized him from the news as Muscular, the guy who had killed the water hose duo. Eraserhead obviously recognized him too, because he immediately reached for his comm, “Shit. Get ready to fight, kids, I’m calling in backup.”

“Oh, don’t do that, Eraserhead.” Kacchan grinned creepily and Izuku was hit with a profound sense of wrongness as he lunged forward and slashed at Eraser’s hand with a knife. “We just wanna see a little bit of your cute blood!”

In the split second it took Eraser to recover from his student attacking him, Kacchan plucked the comm from his ear and tossed it to Muscular, who crushed it in his fist before smirking and letting the pieces fall to the floor in a shower of metallic clinks. Then Kacchan *giggled.*

Izuku couldn’t breathe, “Why, Kacchan?”

“Why, Kacchan?” Kacchan mocked and his grin got wider. Then his face started melting away. “Because he’s super cute and I stole a drop of his blood the last time we met, obviously!”

Izuku stubbled backwards and grabbed his slingshot. Eraser wasn’t recovering very quickly from the attack, which meant that whoever this girl was, she either had a quirk that caused disorientation or she’d drugged the knife and considering that he’d just seen her quirk, his bet was on drugs...unless they were dealing with the villain factory. Oh no.

“Eraser, we need to retreat!” Izuku dodged a slash from the girl’s knife and ran to grab Eraser. “Come on, I think this is the villain factory.”

“Not so fast.” Muscular grabbed him by the collar before he had the chance to reach Eraser. “You’re not getting away that quickly. I got this one Toga, don’t worry.”

He pinned Izuku’s arms to his sides and Izuku was pretty sure he heard one of his ribs crack. Eraser was stumbling now, tripping over his own feet as he tried to grab the capture weapon, “Get...get away from him!”

“Nah, I think I’ll just tear his limbs off.” Muscular grinned savagely and Izuku started struggling harder, but it was useless until Eraser managed to activate his quirk. Even without the extra muscle mass, Muscular was still strong, but it was just enough that Izuku managed to slip out of his grasp...and walk straight into Toga’s knife.

He managed to stumble back at the last second, so the cut between his ribs wasn’t very deep, but it still burned and he could feel the sedative burning as a numb sensation started spreading from the stab wound. At least she wouldn’t be able to use his blood if it was drugged, right? Muscular grabbed him again, holding his arm in a bruising grip as he hoisted him into the air, “Now can I tear him limb from limb?”

“Don’t you dare.”

Izuku managed to gather enough strength to glare at the newcomer, some sleazy guy who was smirking around the cigarette in his mouth, “Sensei wants the merchandise as unharmed as possible, at least to start with. And you managed to nab the hero too! That means we get a bonus, good work. Now drop the kid.”

Muscular threw him to the ground and Izuku could see Eraser trying to reach him, even though he was fighting unconsciousness as well. The new guy crouched down and grabbed Izuku’s chin, yanking his face upwards so he could look his captor in the eye, “Not sure what you did to piss the symbol of evil off, kid, but I don’t envy you.”

Izuku blinked, his vision starting to go back as he struggled to stay awake. The broker dropped him and turned to the villains, “Tie them up and put them in the trunk. We have a delivery to make.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: July 16, 2021 (MDT)

Captured

Chapter Summary

Good things come to those who wait.

Chapter Notes

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Memes!
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More Memes at the End!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hitoshi knew something was wrong when Aizawa didn't show up. Sure, he'd said he'd be a *little* late, but Hitoshi was pretty sure an hour didn't fall into that category. Still, he gave it another half-hour just to be sure before calling him.

He didn't answer.

Hitoshi frowned and dialled Bakugo. Aizawa had been going to get Viridian, so maybe Viridian knew where he was. The phone almost went to voicemail before Bakugo picked it up, "What the fuck do you want, eyebags?"

Hitoshi barely waited for him to finish, "You have Viridian's number, right?"

There was a moment of silence on the other end, "...Yeah? Why?"

"Look, can you call him and ask if he's seen Eraserhead?" Hitoshi asked. "He was supposed to go grab him and meet me an hour and a half ago, but he still hasn't shown up."

“Fine.” Bakugo huffed. “I’ll call him, but you owe me for interrupting my patrol with Edgeshot.”

Hitoshi rolled his eyes, “Whatever, just tell me what he says.”

Bakugo hung up without another word and Hitoshi waited impatiently for him to call back, pacing the rooftop for what felt like an unreasonable amount of time, but when he looked at his phone it had only been about five minutes. Five minutes was long enough to contact a vigilante, right? Maybe he should call back?

The phone rang in his hand and Hitoshi almost dropped it in his haste to pick it up, “What’s going on, did he answer?”

“Viridian isn’t answering and when Edgeshot tried to make contact through Eraserhead’s comm, it had been turned off.” Bakugo answered tensely. “You need to get to the police station immediately.”

Denki was really grateful for all the hours he’d sparred with Izuku, because this Gran Torino guy was just as crazy as he was. The first thing he’d done when Denki arrived was pretend to be dead, and the second thing he’d done was challenge him to a fight, so it had been an interesting evening. He’d only managed to get one good hit in so far and the only reason he’d gotten that much was because it was Gran Torino’s first attack and he had electrified his whole body, so when Gran Torino kicked his back, he got shocked at the same time. He had currently switched to hitting Denki with a plastic plate, which he wasn’t quite sure was an improvement.

Finally, Gran Torino stopped and Denki immediately doubled over, hands on his knees as he tried to catch his breath. Gran Torino just shook his head, “Your phone’s been ringing off the hook kid. Might want to answer that when you get a minute.”

“Ugh…” Denki dragged himself over to his bag and fished out his phone. “Kaminari here…’Sup?”

“Took you long enough to answer Dunce face.” Bakugo answered gruffly. “Look, if Izuku’s mom calls and asks where he is, he’s with you, ok?”

“Umm, what?” Denki blinked. “I mean, ok, yeah, totally, but why?”

“Because Auntie Inko doesn’t know he’s Viridian, you idiot.” Bakugo snapped.

Denki squeaked, “You do?!”

He could almost hear Bakugo rolling his eyes, “We grew up together, you idiot, of course I know. But you’re fucking dating or whatever, so I told her that he was out with you on some last hurrah before your internships or whatever.”

“I…I am not even going to question how you know that.” Denki decided. “Uh, but again, *why.* He usually goes out after she goes to bed.”

Another phone started ringing and Denki looked at Gran Torino, who waved him off, “I’ll answer it, you enjoy your break while it lasts.”

Denki grimaced and turned his attention back to his phonecall, “So, like, obviously I don’t have a problem with covering for him, but why is he with me again?”

There was a long moment of silence before Bakugo groaned, “Look, we don’t know where he is. None of the heroes can contact him and his phone is turned off. I had to call Auntie to make sure he hadn’t just slept in or something, but he wasn’t there either. Izuku will *kill* me if I make his mom worry and it turns out that he just forgot his phone or whatever, hence why he is with *you.* Don’t mess this up.”

“I…I won’t.” Denki swallowed. “But, uh, do I need to be worried? I mean, does this happen all the time or…”

“Izuku has a habit of disappearing when he’s doing vigilante shit, but he’s usually ok in the end, just a bit banged up.” Bakugo answered quickly. “It’s just that no one knows where Eraserhead is either, so everyone’s on high alert right now. Don’t worry, we’ll find him, you just worry about covering with Auntie Inko if she calls.”

“Will do.” Denki nodded. “Call me when you find him.”

“Sure, whatever.” The line went dead as Bakugo hung up.

Denki turned back to Gran Torino, anxious to work out his nervousness with another spar, only to see him staring back with a worried look on his face, “Grab your things, kid, we gotta go.”

“Uh…ok!” Denki hurried to grab his backpack, shoving his phone in his pocket and tugging on his shoes as Gran Torino rushed out the door. “Where are we going?”

Gran Torino furrowed his brow and stared straight ahead as they hurried toward the train station. Denki wasn't even 100% sure they'd closed the door, But Gran didn't seem to care, "Did Toshinori ever tell you about All for One."

Denki swallowed nervously, "Uh, yeah, I know about him. Evil, immortal guy that steals quirks. Why?"

"Apparently, your teacher and some vigilante kid just went missing." Gran Torino glanced at him. "And we're pretty sure he's the one that took 'em."

Izuku woke up sore and disoriented. Had he slept wrong last night or something? He hadn't gotten injured recently, so there wasn't any reason for him to be this sore. Maybe he should tell Mom he was getting sick?

"Problem Child?" Eraser's voice filtered through the mental haze. "Are you with me?"

Izuku jolted and started to freak out when he couldn't move very far. He was tied to a chair. Why was he tied to a chair? The memories of the ambush started filtering back in and Izuku started thrashing, trying desperately to get out of the ropes, "No, Kacchan...and then...but what...why...no…"

"Viridian." Eraser's voice was steady and calming, so Izuku latched onto it for dear life. "You need to calm down. We've been captured and we both need to have steady heads if we expect to find a way out of this. Now breathe with me, ok?"

Izuku obeyed without hesitation, letting himself match Eraser's breathing and using it to ground himself. He...he hadn't felt this helpless since the sludge villain had tried taking control of his body. He hadn't missed the feeling, but after a few minutes he managed to calm down enough to actually be able to look around. Eraser was tied to another chair beside him and they were both facing the door. Izuku tested the ropes again, but they didn't budge. How were they going to get out of this?

"You back, kid?" Eraser asked. "They took my scarf and knife. My goggles too for good measure. Pretty sure they took most of your weapons too. You have more freckles than I expected."

Izuku looked down and saw that, yes, his entire tool belt was gone,

but then his brain caught up and he realized his goggles were nowhere to be found, “Oh no.”

Eraser rolled his eyes, “I was gonna find out what you look like eventually, kid. It’s not a big deal. Just put me one step ahead so I can track you down if we get out of here.”

If .

Izuku took a deep breath, “This is the work of All for One, right?”

Aizawa nodded, “Almost definitely. That broker who arranged everything, Giran? He mentioned the symbol of evil, so it’s a pretty safe bet that it’s not just teh villain factory, but All for One himself who ordered our capture. All Might said he injured him badly a few years ago, which is probably why he didn’t grab us himself.”

Izuku nodded numbly and glanced toward the door. All for One would be walking though that door at any moment. A man who could give and take quirks. It would have been Izuku’s dream as a child, but now...now it was just a nightmare.

“Kid?” Eraser’s voice was hesitant as he interrupted his thoughts. “I don’t want to make you panic again, but you deserve to be prepared for the logical outcomes of this, ok?”

Izuku swallowed hesitantly and nodded.

Eraser looked at him, voice cold as he just stated what Izuku had already put together, “Even if we survive, we’re probably both going to be quirkless after this. You realize that, right?”

Izuku froze. Eraser was going to be quirkless. Nothing would change for Izuku, he didn’t have anything to lose, but for Eraser, it was probably going to feel the same way it felt for Izuku when he was four: like the end of the world. He couldn’t let Eraser go through that like he had. He needed to say something to comfort him, something he wished he’d heard when he had had to come to terms with the fact that he would never have any power at all, something a little better than *I’m sorry*.

He wouldn’t let Eraser think he was all alone, because he wasn’t. Izuku wasn’t going to abandon him, and he’d fight tooth and nail if the commission tried to take Eraser’s license alongside his quirk because he *knew* that Eraser would be an amazing hero, even without a one. He needed to let Eraser know that it was going to be ok. There

were cameras in this room, there had to be, so Izuku kept his voice to a low murmur, just barely enough for Eraser to be able to hear him, but not loud enough to be intelligible if someone was watching them.

“In my experience,” Izuku couldn’t bring himself to look anywhere but the floor as he took a deep breath, “being quirkless isn't nearly as bad as people make it out to be.”

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
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Next Update: July 19, 2021 (MDT)

Mortality

Chapter Summary

The arrival of All for One

Chapter Notes

Art!
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OgawaIsNowMyHusband
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Memes!
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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shouta was an idiot.

In my experience, it's not nearly as bad as people make it out to be.

It was like everything suddenly clicked into place. All those times that Viridian had said he couldn't be a hero, his weird insistence that he wasn't actually a vigilante, Kacchan bursting out laughing after Shouta suggested a quirk, all of it made sense. No wonder no one could figure out what Viridian's quirk was, *he didn't have one!*

Wait...Viridian didn't have a quirk. He'd been doing everything quirkless! He'd been fighting people dosed on trigger and modified to have multiple, powerful quirks! He was outmatched on a daily basis! That was so dangerous and he didn't have any way to defend himself and...and what was Shouta even thinking? He *knew* that Viridian was capable of defending himself and defeating strong opponents. He'd seen the kid fight villains three times his size and win, so why had Shouta forgotten all of that and started panicking as soon as the kid said he was quirkless?

No wonder the kid had never told anyone. Viridian had probably been met with two responses when people learned about his quirk status: hatred or pity. Growing up like that, with people rejecting him left

and right just for the way he was born, it was a wonder he was as well adjusted as he was, honestly. That was, if becoming a teenage vigilante counted as being well adjusted. It probably didn't, but at least they'd been able to give him a little bit of support...which the kid was most likely, and justifiably, terrified of losing now that Shouta knew about his quirk status. His plan of enrolling Viridian in the vigilante rehabilitation program had just flown right out the window, because there was no way that the hero commission wouldn't exploit every possible loophole to keep him out of the program, but maybe if they could find a way to loophole him back into it…

Shouta was so busy reeling at the revelation that he almost missed the way that Viridian's eyes were darting around the room, searching for something. Shouta managed to pull himself out of his thoughts just as the kid found what he was looking for and he discreetly followed the kid's gaze for just long enough to see the camera before pretending he hadn't seen it at all. All for One was watching.

Viridian cleared his throat, calling Shouta's attention back to him, and there was a calculating look in his eye as he started talking again, this time loud enough for the cameras to hear, "I, uh, I think that All for One will steal my quirk first."

Shouta had no idea what the kid was planning, considering that he'd just all but confirmed that he didn't have a quirk to steal, but he'd play along. "Interesting theory, especially since he's been after mine longer, at least considering the incident that led to Shirakumo's abduction."

Viridian shot him half a grateful look before continuing, "Yeah, but my, uh... *quirk* will be more useful to him."

Shouta narrowed his eyes, "How so?"

"Well, think about it." The problem child sounded more certain now. "I can pick apart any quirk within seconds and almost instantly identify any weaknesses, not to mention find new uses and figure out how they might fit together. That's how we figured out that Kurogiri was Shirakumo: I was able to pick apart the quirk and figure out what quirks went into it. An ability like that would be more useful than a simple canceling ability, considering that his collection of quirks can already easily overpower any single quirk user."

Was...was the kid *baiting* All for One? Of all the stupid, *brillient* plans the Viridian had come up with, this had to be simultaniously one of

the dumbest and the smartest of all of them. On the one hand, if it worked and All for One went for Viridian's quirk first, there would be a split second when he realized there was nothing to steal and if they could find a way to untie themselves, there would be an opening that they could use to fight back and maybe even escape, but if they failed and missed that opening, which they would because they were still tied up, Shouta was honestly terrified of how All for One would react to the knowledge that Viridian had done so much damage *all without a quirk*. They couldn't risk it, especially since Shouta was 90% sure Viridian was planning on sacrificing himself to prevent Shouta's quirk from being taken, and while he appreciated the thought, it was self-destructive and wouldn't even work.

"I don't think so, problem child." Shouta yanked on his ropes slightly to show Viridian *why* that plan was such a bad idea. "I could always erase his quirk to keep him from taking yours, so he'll take mine first."

Viridian frowned and Shouta could tell he was thinking hard to figure out how to say what he was thinking. It would be easiest if they could speak openly, but simply whispering among themselves would tip All for One off that they were plotting something. Eventually, Viridian sighed and slumped down in his seat as much as he could with the ropes. The way he was sitting now meant that their arms were rubbing together slightly and Shouta had to fight not to react when he felt something hard beneath the baggy fabric of the hoodie. A pang of hope shot through him, along with a small amount of pride. The kid had hidden an extra weapon in case of emergencies and All for One had missed it. They had a chance.

"Only if he doesn't know quirks well." Viridian insisted, wiggling and bracing himself against shouta until whatever he had hidden up his sleeve came loose. "When I analyze quirks, especially the transferred ones, it's almost like each quirk has its own...well, its own flavor almost and I think that the quirks probably act like what they are. So if he takes a quirk that erases powers, there's a risk that it might erase *his* ability to take powers, at least until he gets used to it and takes full control of it."

Shouta didn't smirk as a screwdriver finally dropped into Viridian's hand, but he wanted to. He had no idea if the kid was pulling theories out of thin air or if All for One losing his abilities to steal quirks was actually a risk, but the important thing was that *All for One* believed it.

He glanced toward the camera and spoke a little lower to seem

suspicious, but not low enough that the cameras wouldn't pick him up. The most effective way to bait All for One into doing what they wanted was to make him think they wanted the opposite, "So we should try to get him to take my quirk first, because then he won't be able to take yours."

Viridian grinned, "Exactly."

"Kid…" Shouta said seriously. "You know we can't afford to pull any punches, right?"

Viridian's smile fell as they made eye contact and he swallowed nervously, "I know."

Shouta gave a quick nod and let the kid do his thing. They had set their trap and now it was just a waiting game. Shouta glanced down to see Viridian furiously working the screwdriver through the ropes, loosening them and tearing them a little bit at a time. The kid's wrists were raw, but it was only a few minutes until he managed to get one hand free. He kept his hands together, pretending to be helpless until it was the correct moment to strike. Shouta's heart broke a little as he wondered how many times Viridian had had to use that trick in his life just to survive growing up quirkless. People wouldn't ever have believed he was anything more than a weak, helpless child, even though he was so much more.

He tried to signal the kid to pass over the screwdriver so that he could free himself as well, but before he could, the door opened and they both froze as All for One walked in, bringing an almost tangible sense of terror with him, "So, Viridian. After all those times your meddling has ruined my symphony, we finally meet."

Viridian gulped and he was trembling enough that he almost fumbled his grip on the screwdriver. Shouta had known that if he'd gotten to the point of hiring kidnappers, he had to be angry, but he'd underestimated just how much rage a man called the *symbol of evil* could contain. Their plan was looking more and more desperate by the minute and logically, it *was.* How could they expect to fight against an immortal, multiquirked madman armed with nothing but one quirk between them and a screwdriver? They had to somehow make it work, though, because Shouta was sure of it now: if All for One got his way, they were going to die.

All for One drew himself up to his full height and Shouta blinked as he realized that All MIght must have given as good as he'd got. He was

blind.

That didn't make it any less terrifying when he smiled right at them, "I couldn't help but overhear your conversation earlier. You are quite right, Viridian, a powerful analysis quirk such as your *will* be quite useful to my endeavors. Knowing that the behavior of quirks mimicked their functions would have enabled me to interweave quirks decades earlier, but you know how the saying goes. You live and you learn. Or, I will. Sadly, you're not going to live much longer, but don't worry, I'll gladly relieve you of that quirk so you can die with the knowledge that it is being used to further my goals."

"Don't touch him." Shouta growled. "Take mine instead."

All for one turned, "Ah yes, that *was* your plan, wasn't it? Encourage me to take your pathetic quirk first so I would be forced to spare the boy? I must be honest, while I would *adore* to hear you beg and plead for his life, you'll have to be patient and wait your turn. Don't worry, I'll *kill* you first and that way, Viridian will be able to watch, how does that sound?"

Like hell. Shouta grit his teeth and forced himself not to activate his quirk as All for One reached toward Viridian. The kid had said he was quirkless. All for One wouldn't be able to take anything from him. He'd be fine...hopefully.

Viridian tensed as All for One's hand got closer and he gripped the screwdriver tight enough that Shouta could see his knuckles turning white, only for All for one to stop inches from his face and turn to Eraserhead, "What? You're not even going to try to cancel my quirk?"

"You would just wait until I blink." Shouta spat, glaring at him as he tensed in preparation. "It would be illogical to prolong the inevitable."

All for One chuckled, "True. Too bad that intelligence won't be enough to save you *or* your protege."

He moved suddenly, grabbing Viridian's face roughly and everything happened in a blur. The moment All for One realized that there was no quirk to steal, he snatched his hand back like he'd been burned, "You…"

The problem child didn't give him a chance to finish his sentence. The moment All for One reared back, Shouta activated his quirk, the only thing he *could* do while he was still tied up, and Viridian surged forward, using the screwdriver to stab All for One where his eyes had

been. The violence should have surprised him, but this was the kid that brutally beat one of the first villains he ever fought with a soup can. When lives were in danger, they couldn't afford to worry about fighting dirty: they did what was necessary to win.

Without his quirks, All for One was frail enough that he couldn't put up much of a fight and Shouta felt a mixture of pride, horror, and grief as Viridian desperately stabbed again and again, but he couldn't afford to look away, not when All for One probably had a mixture of healing quirks at his disposal. If he was still alive when Shouta had to blink, that was it. There wouldn't be any mercy and their deaths were guaranteed to be painful.

Shouta kept his eyes open as long as possible, straining his quirk as far as it would go, but after about a minute, his eyes started burning, "Kid. I'm at my limit. I have to blink."

Viridian nodded and brought the screwdriver down one last time before checking what was left of All for One's neck for a pulse. He waited a few more seconds before turning to Shouta and giving him a sharp nod.

Shouta sighed in relief and finally closed his eyes, blinking them rapidly for a few seconds and wishing that the villains hadn't stolen his eyedropps as well. When he opened them, Viridian was staring at the body tensely and Shouta joined him. Now that Shouta wasn't erasing his quirks, it was the moment of truth. If he was going to be able to revive, now was the time he would do it.

He didn't know how long they sat staring at All for One's body, but it was long enough for it to become clear that All for One wasn't going to revive and long enough for Viridian's brain to catch up to what he'd just had to do. The kid dropped the screwdriver, staring at the body in horror as he scrambled away, "I...he...I…"

"It's ok, problem child." Shouta tried to speak calmly and strained against the ropes, trying to reach his kid as Viridian saw his own hands and started freaking out even more. "He was going to kill us both. You did what you had to do."

"I...I just…" Viridian brought his hands to his head, smearing blood through his hair as he spiraled into a panic attack. "I didn't…."

"Viridian!" Shouta shouted firmly and the kid's head snapped toward him with wide, haunted eyes. "Listen to me. It's ok. We're gonna be ok. Ok? Now untie me. We need to call the heroes. They'll help."

“The heroes.” Viridian glanced back toward the body on the floor. Tears streaked down his face, cutting through the blood and grime and Shouta started panicking as he watched things click together for the kid and he got to his feet. “I…I need to…”

Shouta tugged at his ropes again, “Don’t you dare run away right now, problem child! I’m not going to let them arrest you. Please, this is a part of hero work, but you can’t go through this alone, kid. Just let us help you!”

“I’m quirkless, Eraserhead.” Viridian turned to him and smiled sadly, and Shouta’s stomach sank. “I can’t be a hero.”

Viridian ran for the door and Shouta felt tears running down his own cheeks, even as he instinctually activated his quirk, “No! Get back here! Problem child!”

Viridian hesitated by the doorway, but didn’t look back at him, “I’ll make sure the rest of the building is clear and call the heroes. I’m sorry.”

He was gone before Shouta could blink.

Chapter End Notes

> Why did I not put a major character death warning?
> Villain deaths do not have the same emotional impact as the death of a protagonist or heroic side character, and with the role that Izuku's suicidal ideation plays in the story, I knew that people would automatically assume that it was *Izuku* who was going to die, which would negatively impact the entire experience of reading the story.
>
> Next Update: July 23, 2021 (MDT)

Dread

Chapter Summary

Aftermath

Chapter Notes

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Memes!
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See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku wasn't exactly sure how he'd gotten home. Everything was a blur and he was hyperventilating and shaking so badly that he was having trouble even opening the front door, but somehow he'd managed to get here, sticking to the shadows so he wouldn't freak people out. Why was the doorknob so slippery?!

Oh. There was still blood on his hands.

He took a shaky breath and wiped his hands on his hoodie before he realized that it was covered in blood too. For once in his life, he almost wished it *was* his, because that would mean he hadn't just…

All for One had been planning to kill them, Izuku was certain of it.

He'd even *said it,* and he'd been planning on taking Eraserhead's quirk. Izuku couldn't let that happen, but the only way he'd been able to think to take down such a powerful opponent was...but maybe if he'd had a powerful quirk he could have found some way to restrain him, but the fact was that he was weak and outclassed, so he didn't have the option of taking All for One down peacefully like he should have. He'd had to do it permanently.

It took him a minute to find a section of fabric that was clean enough to wipe his hands on and he made sure to wipe down the doorknob as well. He'd have to sanitize it before he went to bed, he didn't want Mom to have to see something like this. Thankfully the apartment was dark when he finally got inside, so she must still be asleep. Izuku practically ran into the bathroom. He didn't look in the mirror as he shut the door and locked it behind him, leaning against the doorframe as the last of the adrenaline finally ran out.

What had he just done? A choked sob tore out of his throat before he could stop it and he slammed his hands over his mouth to muffle the noise. He'd just...and he'd made Eraserhead watch and then just left him there! Maybe it was a good thing he didn't have a quirk, because he didn't deserve to be a hero.

He couldn't stop crying as he finally turned to the sink and started washing his hands, gasping for air as he tried to ignore the red running down the sink. He...he just needed to clean up. He just needed to get a shower and...and he'd decide what to do with the clothes later. If Eraserhead came to arrest him for murder, they'd probably need them as evidence, and he didn't want to make Eraser's life harder than necessary by washing them or throwing them away. Or...was he *supposed* to get rid of the evidence? Either way, washing them was out of the question because Izuku knew he'd pass out before the laundry was done and he didn't want Mom finding his vigilante outfit in the washer, especially if the stains didn't come out on the first wash.

As he waited for the shower to warm up, Izuku dug a plastic bag out from under the sink and shoved everything he was wearing inside. He'd just toss them in the back of his closet for now and deal with it tomorrow. There were tears running down his face, but he was starting to calm down at least a little.

One shower later, after he'd shoved the bag all the way into the back corner of his closet and wiped all traces of blood off everything he'd touched, Izuku collapsed into bed, wishing that he could still dream of

being a hero.

Shouta rubbed at his wrists as he waited for Tsukauchi to come interrogate him. The marks were going to take a while to go away, but the memory of his problem child running away, panicking and drenched in blood would take even longer...if it ever went away at all. He'd torn up his hands trying to tear through the ropes, but he'd barely managed to get one hand free before All Might had burst into the room, taken one look at All for One's body on the floor, and shrunken into his smaller form in a puff of steam but by that point the kid was long gone.

There was a knock on the door and Tsukauchi plked his head in, "Hey Eraser, how are you holding up?"

Shouta ignored the question, "Did Viridian tell you where to find me?"

"Actually, it was your students." Tsukauchi sat down across from him. "Shinso raised the alarm when you didn't show up for his internship and called Kacchan, who tried to contact Viridian, but was unable to. We immediately suspected All for One because of what Kurogiri said during the sports festival incident, so we reached out to Gran Torino. As the next holder of One for All, Kaminari explained he has access to the vestiges, including the original holder, who was All for One's brother and obviously knows his thought processes better than we do. We showed Kaminari all the evidence we had gathered, along with what we knew of past villain factory locations and where you and Viridian were last seen, and he volunteered to short out his brain so he could communicate with the vestiges and get us a list of possible locations. Oboro warped All Might around to check out every single one until we found you."

"Problem children, all of them." Shouta shook his head fondly. "By my count, we were missing for less than six hours."

Tsukauchi nodded, "So what happened on your end? All we know is that you disappeared and then, of course, what All Might saw when he arrived. To be honest, we were expecting to find you and Viridian together."

Shouta almost flinched at the reminder, "...he ran. Again."

Tsukauchi frowned sympathetically, "Was he the one who…?"

Shouta nodded, "We need to find him. It wasn't fair to make him do

that, but killing All for One before he could kill us was the only way we were going to get out of there alive. He was panicking when he left. Obviously. I mean, you've got the pictures of what he did right there in front of you."

Tsukauchi looked slightly pale, "We'll make finding him our first priority. Are you any closer to figuring out his identity?"

"...I saw his face." Shouta said quietly. "They took our goggles and most of our weapons, but Viridian had a backup that nobody knew about, which is the only reason why we survived. If I can find even a single picture of the kid, I can identify him."

"Really?" Tsukacuhi gasped. "That's amazing! If we put everything we know about him into the system...well, there's still going to be thousands of results to comb through, but…"

"Not there won't." Shouta interrupted.

Tsukaukii blinked, "What?"

"I…" Shouta hesitated. 'I learned something about the kid. If I'm running the numbers right in my head, there should only be a handful of search results, if that."

Tsukauchi grabbed his pen, "Alright, I'll admit that I'm skeptical, but tell me what you know and I'll run it through the database and get a list for you to search through as soon as possible…"

"No."

"No?" Tsukauchi repeated. "Eraser, don't you want to know the kid's identity?"

"Oh, you have no idea." Shouta agreed bluntly. "But I'm not going to tell you how to find him until the commission makes a public announcement that he'll be joining the vigilante rehabilitation program and attending UA."

Inko got up when her alarm rang, but she'd been awake ever since Katsuki had called and she'd found Izuku's bed neatly made and his shoes missing from beside the door. Sure, she'd known that Izuku was up to *something* most nights, but she'd assumed it was like homework or insomnia not disappearing! And yes, Katsuki had immediately said that Izuku had been planning on meeting Kaminari, but he was on his

internship in another city! Besides, if that really *were* true then why didn't Izuku mention it and why did Katsuki only bring it up *after* she'd told him that Izuku wasn't home, as if it was an afterthought? She'd tried calling Izuku, but of course he didn't answer and when she'd called Kaminari, he'd nervously insisted that Izuku had just run to the bathroom real quick and that he'd text her.

He never did.

Whatever her son was *really* up to, though, at least he had friends who were willing to lie for him and she couldn't find it in her to be angry about that. He had *friends.* Katsuki seemed to be genuinely kind to him and Kaminari was everything Inko could have asked for, and if they knew what was going on then they'd help take care of him, not that Izuku couldn't take care of himself. She wasn't sure when exactly he'd learned to fight, but if he could win spars against Kaminari, an actual hero student and runner-up at the UA sports festival, then he could protect himself and she didn't have to worry about him. At least not too much. She was still worried though.

He finally came home an hour or so before sunrise, but in the time it took her to leap out of bed, and reach for the door of her room, he'd already locked himself inside the bathroom. She'd been about to go talk to him anyway, just knock on the door and maybe brew some tea so they could have a midnight chat or something like that. It would be a perfect bonding time and maybe, just maybe, Izuku might finally open up to her about what he'd been doing most nights.

Then she heard him sobbing.

She had frozen with her hand on the doorknob, hesitating. Everything inside her *screamed* to run comfort her son, to go and knock down the bathroom door and give him a hug, but...but her son had built those walls for a *reason.* If she ran to him and forced herself inside before he was ready to invite her in, she'd lose him just when those walls were getting to be the weakest. If she went out there right now, he'd run away and retreat back into himself like he had when he'd stopped telling her about the bullying. Inko couldn't risk that. She wouldn't push him away again like she had when he was four. She *refused* to lose her son.

And so, as much as it hurt, she stayed in her room and listened to her son cry. Eventually, the shower turned on and soon enough, Izuku was in bed again. Inko had, at some point, sat down on the floor and that was where she stayed until her alarm went off. Inko stared at her

phone for a long minute before cancelling the alarm and searching through her contacts. It didn't take long to find the Asui's phone number.

"Um, Beru?" Inko said. "I know this is super last minute, but I was wondering if you could cover my shift today? Something happened with Izuku and I think he needs me here."

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X

Deals

Chapter Summary

Plans are put in motion

Chapter Notes

Art!
tenkshito
joshonboard
Haruuuu(bee go brr)
RaspberryFloral
OgawaIsNowMyHusband
Im totally a B E E
Hollis
MidnightShadow
Superlammy
Hattie
Sans666345
viridenki supremacy > X X

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Shouta kept his expression carefully neutral as Tsukauchi walked back into the interrogation room, this time accompanied by both Nedzu and a representative from the hero commission. Shouta almost breathed a sigh of relief when he saw they'd sent Mera to handle it, thank god. He was too exhausted to question the *why* of Shouta's request too deeply. Plus, if worse came to worst, Shoutla could always bribe him with a new sleeping bag. Hopefully.

"Are you sure you want to do this?" Tsukauchi asked. "Withholding info like this *is* technically obstruction of justice."

"I'm just trying to do what's best for both society and viridian." Shouta answered carefully. "The kid was never the most confident to begin with, but with the circumstances of All for One's death, if Viridian doesn't have a guarantee that he'll be allowed to become a hero, he'll bolt before I can even get close, which could potentially cut him off from his civilian identity and just make things worse for

everyone. So yeah, unless the commission makes a public announcement about his acceptance into the vigilante program so that everyone, including him, knows that we're serious, then I don't know anything."

Tsukauchi groaned, "Eraserhead…"

"It's alright, detective." Mera cut in tiredly. "We're about as tired of trying to track this kid down as you all are, so if Eraserhead thinks that giving a public announcement is enough to corner Viridian into becoming a legal hero, then my personal opinion is that it's one less headache for us to worry about. What do you think, Nedzu? You're the smart one."

"I think that I trust my employee." Nedzu said cheerily. "I am sure that Eraserhead must have a good reason if he is being so insistent on this and he, of course, knows the boy better than any of us, so I believe it's a reasonable request. Besides, I'm sure the commission doesn't want him to continue running around without a license, correct?"

"You can say that again." Mera groaned. "It wouldn't be as big of an issue if he wasn't so popular, but of course the stupid teenager had to go and make himself a meme, which risks inspiring copycats, which is something we would really prefer to nip in the bud as soon as possible. The biggest hold-up on our end is how it will look if we make the announcement and the kid runs anyway."

"Ah yes, that *would* be a tad awkward." Nedzu agreed. "But I am sure that Eraserhead is willing to guarantee Viridian's capture! Will that be an issue, Aizawa?"

"No." Shouta resisted the urge to grin victoriously. "I will *personally* make sure that the problem child is in our hands by the end of the day. If for some reason I fail, I'll gladly take the fall for it, but this is the best chance we have at finally catching him and I don't want to pass that up."

"And, of course, it will help keep the media from breathing down your necks." Nedzu smiled. "I have noticed some of the more intrepid reporters have already sniffed out that *something* happened last night. Letting them believe it was the capture of a popular vigilante is much more palatable than explaining the truth of All for One, I believe."

Mera shrugged and stood up, "Perfect, glad that's over. Eraserhead, make sure you congratulate the kid when you arrest him."

This time, Shouta did grin, “Don't worry, I will.”

Izuku was feeling so many emotions that they all cancelled each other out and left him feeling almost numb. He heard mom moving around in the kitchen and frowned as he looked at the clock. Shouldn’t she be at work right now?

The confusion was enough to get him out of bed and he hesitated for a moment before grabbing his eraserhead hoodie off the back of the chair and pulling it on. It was dumb, especially since ERaserhead would probably never want to see him again, much less work with him, considering that he was both quirkless and a murderer now, not to mention that it wasn’t even cold enough to be wearing a jacket, but, well...there was a reason Mom called it his comfort hoodie and it couldn’t *hurt,* right?

He didn’t even notice that he’d been moving silently like he would for vigilante work until Mom didn’t even notice that he was standing behind her, “Good Morning Mom.”

To her credit, Mom only jumped a little, “Good morning, baby! How did you sleep?”

Izuku gave her a smile that didn’t quite reach his eyes, “Uh, it was...it was a long night, but don’t worry too much about me, I’ll just go to bed early tonight! What about you? Don’t you have work today?”

“Uh…” Mom turned back to the stove. “Um, Beru wanted some more hours, so I volunteered to let her take my shift.”

“O-oh.” Izuku frowned. That didn’t seem quite right, but he trusted her, so decided not to question it too deeply. “Um...ok.”

“Breakfast will be ready in just a libit.” Mom said kindly. “Why don’t you go relax for a while? You can watch some TV and I can call you when the food is ready?”

Izuku nodded absently and wandered out of the kitchen, a little unsure about what to do with himself while he waited. Mom had said to watch tv, but...would a murder as big as all for One’s be on the news? Maybe the heroes would try to keep it quiet like they had with the villain factory investigation and his involvement with the sports festival. If reporters *had* caught wind of what he’d done, would they be clamoring for his arrest now that there was blood on his hands?

Izuku knew that it probably wasn't a good idea, but a morbid sense of curiosity had him turning on the tv anyway. The news was running a special interest story at the moment, which was reassuring because if they had time to show that, then they probably weren't going to report on a quirkless vigilante murdering the symbol of evil, since if they were going to, then *that* story would take priority and screen time away from the less important ones. Small blessings, he supposed.

Izuku relaxed slightly. No one was going to be talking about him today. The special interest story wrapped up and Izuku inhaled sharply as the camera cut back to the station to reveal a grainy picture of him in vigilante gear plastered across the green screen behind the reporters. Maybe he'd spoken too soon.

Shouta could almost *feel* Nedzu's curiosity as they watched the press conference from Tsukauchi's computer, but he stayed stubbornly silent until the announcement had been made and there was no way the hero commission could back out of it, "Alright, let's catch the kid and get it over with."

"It's quite unlike you to stick your neck out like this Aizawa, even for a child with potential." Nedzu pounced. Sometimes, it was almost like the principal could smell metaphorical blood in the water. "I would have thought guaranteeing the capture of a flighty vigilante would be the height of irrationality."

Shouta just gave him a half-hearted glare and leaned over to look at Tsukauchi's screen. "He's a teenager, most likely around Kacchan's age, so set the search parameters to males between the ages of 14 to 16."

Tsukauchi sighed, but entered the information anyway, "You know that's not going to narrow it down Eraserhead, so I really hope you know what you're doing. You said you saw his face, right? Do you have any sort of physical description?"

Shouta nodded, "Green hair, green eyes, freckles."

"So basically nothing we didn't already know, with the exception of eye color." Tsukauchi sat back. "There's still over 2000, results and that's assuming he lives in musutafu and not one of the surrounding cities."

Shouta leaned a bit closer, "Only include results that are listed as quirkless."

Tsukauchi froze, “Seriously?”

Shouta just grinned.

The reporter smiled at the camera as Izuku stared at the screen in shock, “In a press conference just a few minutes ago, the hero public safety commission announced that Viridian, a popular vigilante based in Musutafu, will be joining the ranks of legal heroes! This makes him the second vigilante approved for the vigilante rehabilitation program in just as many weeks, after the acceptance of Touya Todoroki, aka Dabi, just after the UA sports festival. For the information of everyone watching at home, less than 25% of active vigilantes meet the requirements for the program and even fewer are invited to participate, leaving less than 5% of vigilantes who ever end up getting a license this way, so it’s a pretty exclusive club!”

Izuku couldn’t keep his jaw from dropping. They had to be talking about some other Viridian, right? Were there any other vigilantes that went by Viridian? Izuku couldn’t think of any, but even if there were, then why were they showing *his* picture on the screen? But they couldn’t be talking about him! Eraserhead knew he was quirkless now, he *knew* that Izuku couldn’t even be a hero, much less qualify for the vigilante rehabilitation program, plus he’d just killed someone, which was something that no real vigilante or hero would do. Izuku couldn’t even be a vigilante right, so why was the news saying he could be a hero?!

He was so caught up in his thoughts that he hardly noticed someone knocking on the door or Mom going to answer it. If anything, he thought it was a salesman or maybe a package until Mom came in, “Izuku, baby? There’s someone here to talk to you.”

Izuku’s eyes widened as he saw Eraserhead. Next to his mom. In his living room. Shit.

“Hey problem child.” Eraserhead hid a grin beneath his capture weapon. “It’s nice to officially meet you, Izuku Midoriya.”

Chapter End Notes

Next Update: July 30, 2021 (MDT)

Found

Chapter Summary

If lost, return to Eraserhead.

Chapter Notes

Art!
vail X
PJ (Ivan)
liquid_water
Mae
yumi/ghost
procrastination at its finest
MiHwa
Hattie
CryptidCat
Plumeiris
MidnightShadow X
Dumbass.Org_ X

Memes!
X X X X X X X X

More Memes at End!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Izuku tried desperately to come up with something to say as Mom looked between the two of them, “I’m sorry, Mr. Eraserhead, Izuku’s probably a little bit shocked at the moment, you’re his favorite hero. Um...would you like some tea?”

Eraserhead nodded politely, “Yes, that would be wonderful. Thank you, Mrs. Midoriya.”

Izuku waited until Mom was back in the kitchen and Eraserhead was sitting down in one of the armchairs before he finally said anything, “Are you here to arrest me?”

“In a way.” Eraserhead shrugged. “I see you’ve been watching the news. Congratulations.”

Izuku picked at his sleeve, “I can’t be a hero, Eraserhead. I’m

quirkless. I can't even *technically* be a vigilante, much less participate in the rehabilitation program. Even if I were good enough to be a hero, I...I don't meet the requirements. The hero commission…."

"Isn't going to want a quirkless hero." Eraserhead rolled his eyes. "Yeah, I know. Hence why I made them announce your acceptance before I told them about your quirk status. They can't back out now without publicly acknowledging their reasoning, which could potentially bring them under fire for quirkism. They won't risk that, problem child, so yeah, it may not *technically* be allowed, but you're not *technically* a vigilante either and yet you've saved more people than some pros. Let's face it kid, you deserve that license."

"No, I don't." Izuku said softly. "I just killed someone, Eraserhead. The commision won't even have to say anything about me not having a quirk to disqualify me from the program."

"It was self defense, problem child." Eraserhead said firmly. "All for One was too powerful to beat any other way. You were placed in an impossible situation where you had to kill him before he killed us, so it's not like you were given a choice."

"I still…" Izuku swallowed. "Vigilantes can't be in the rehabilitation program if they use excessive force."

"It's not excessive if it's necessary, kid." Eraser argued. "And, legally, I authorized it, considering that you wouldn't have been able to actually damage All for One if I hadn't been canceling his quirks. It also doesn't hurt that All Might himself tried to kill the same villain years ago and failed. From a legal standpoint, the use of lethal force was completely justified."

"That doesn't make it right." Izuku's hands started trembling again as he remembered how they'd looked covered in blood the night before. "I forced you to watch…"

"I *chose* to help you." Eraser corrected. "Kid, quirkless or not, you just took down one of the most dangerous villains in history. You *can* be a hero."

"No!" Izuku yelled as he jumped up from the couch. "No! This isn't right! You should be arresting me for murder, not telling me I can be a hero!"

"What in the world is going on here?!"

Izuku and Eraserhead both froze and slowly turned to look at his mom, who was standing in the doorway leading to the kitchen. Izuku stuttered, completely unable to even think and Eraserhead seemed equally at a loss. Mom looked between the two of them briefly, a worried expression on her face, “Izuku, baby, what are you talking about? Why would Eraserhead be arresting you for murder?”

“Uh…” Izuku opened and closed his mouth a few times. “Um...well…”

He didn’t know to be relieved or mortified that Eraser recovered more quickly than he did, standing and gesturing toward the couch, “Mrs. Midoriya, perhaps you should sit down for this.”

Mom’s expression hardened, “Perhaps you should explain a bit more about why you’re here.”

Eraserhead sighed, “Have you ever heard of a vigilante that goes by the name of Viridian?”

Izuku only glanced at her briefly before he started staring more intensely at the floor, but he still saw the moment that she connected all the dots, “Oh…oh baby.”

“I’m sorry.” Izuku curled in on himself. “I didn’t want you to worry.”

“I guess that means you didn’t know?” Eraserhead asked.

“No, I didn’t, but…” Mom glanced at him. “I’m honestly not surprised.”

Izuku did a double take, “What?’

“Izuku, baby, I knew there was *something* going on, I just didn’t know what.” Mom smiled gently. “You’ve been happier, you’ve been making friends, learning to fight. It didn’t take much to realize that there was something you weren’t telling me, I was just waiting for you to be ready to open up to me.”

It wasn’t a great time for the Midoriya tears to make an appearance, but he couldn’t help it, “So...you’re not mad?”

“I…well...” Mom sat down beside him and put a hand on his knee, “You stayed safe, right?”

Izuku clenched his fists and refused to meet her eyes as he shook his head. He felt Mom’s hand tense on his knee as everything fell into

place, “Oh.”

“I’m doing better.” Izuku said weakly. “I…I have friends now. I don’t want to…It would be bad if I…I’m not *trying* to die. Not anymore.”

There was a long moment of silence before Mom spoke again, “But you were before?”

“That’s part of why it’s important that your son comes into custody.” Eraser cut in. “We would be able to get him a therapist that’s qualified to deal with both his depression and the kind of trauma that comes with almost a year as a vigilante.”

Izuku’s head shot up, “I don’t need…there are other people who need their help more. I don’t want to waste a therapist’s time when there are other people who are more worth helping.”

Mom’s expression fell, “Izuku…”

“It’s not a waste of time, problem child.” Eraser groaned. “But if it helps you feel better, it’s actually standard procedure to require therapy after last night’s incident.”

Mom glanced between the two of them, “What happened? I know that Katsuki and Kaminari were trying to cover for him, but Izuku didn’t come home until almost sunrise, so I’d like an explanation, please.”

“We were kidnapped by a villain.” Eraserhead didn’t sugarcoat it. “Viridian managed to save both our lives, but lethal force was required to do so. It was self-defense, so the kid won’t have to worry about any charges, but it’s normal for there to be some lingering issues and it’s only logical to provide therapy to help heroes recover.”

“But I…I’m quirkless, Eraserhead.” Izuku repeated weakly. “I…I can’t be a hero.”

Mom squeezed his knee and when he looked up at her, she was smiling, “Izuku. Baby. Can’t you see? You already *are.* ”

Izuku bluescreened, “What?”

To his surprise, Mom actually giggled, “Izuku, you save people every night, that’s what a hero *does.* ”

“She’s right, kid.” Eraser agreed. “You might not be a pro, but that doesn’t mean you’re not a hero. You already do pretty much

everything we do, except for the paperwork."

"But…" Izuku was still reeling. "But I'm not! I…I'm quirkless."

"I…I'm sorry, Izuku." Mom reached out and hugged him, "I should have supported your dream more when you were younger, but I didn't know how skilled and determined you could be when you put your mind to something. You *can* be a hero, baby. I just know it."

"But…" Izuku stared at her. "But it's dangerous!"

"Yes, it is." Mom exhaled slowly. "And I'm going to be worried about you, obviously, but I'm a strong mama, I can handle that. What I can't handle is you holding yourself back from what obviously makes you happy, just because some people think you're too weak. You are strong, Izuku. If you want to be a hero, I will be there cheering you on every step of the way. Just…just tell me next time. Deal?"

Izuku chuckled, tears streaming down his face, "Deal."

Mom nodded, smiling, and turned to Eraserhead, "Now how exactly is this going to work? You said something about hero custody. Is Izuku going to have to go to prison?"

"Think more along the lines of glorified house arrest." Eraser said. "Because he's quirkless and doesn't technically fall under vigilante charges, we have a bit more leeway, but we still want to keep an eye on him. After we're done here, I'll take you down to the station to fill out the forms and get you fitted with a tracking anklet. Obviously, you'll have a curfew and there will be absolutely zero solo patrolling for quite a while, got it problem child?"

"Got it!" Izuku nodded. "So I'll be patrolling with you?"

Eraser shrugged, "Mostly, or another hero. I know Amplifier called dibs on at least one day a week."

Izuku reached for a notebook to start writing everything down, "And what about training? If the goal is to get me a license then I'll need some official combat training, plus a little more on legal procedures and protocols at the very least."

"You'll be joining class 1A for combat training." Eraserhead looked tired for some reason as he continued. "After we confirmed your identity, however, Nedzu dug up your school records and insisted on overseeing your academic education himself. You might join 1A for

some academic classes, but you will most definitely have extra classes in the afternoon, more so that we can keep an eye on you and make sure you're not going out and sticking your nose in places it doesn't belong like you have a habit of doing. Hopefully he'll limit himself to teaching you analysis and not how to end the world, but whatever, that's not my responsibility."

Izuku sat back and waited for his world to turn rightside up again, but it never did, "I'm going to UA. I'm gonna be a hero. Wait a minute, I'm gonna be a hero!"

Eraserhead rolled his eyes, "Yeah, kid, that's what I've been trying to tell you for months now."

Mom chuckled, "You're gonna do amazing sweetie. I'm so proud of you. And you get to be in the same class as Katsuki and Kaminari!"

"That's going to be a nightmare." Eraser groaned. "I'm already mourning my lack of sleep."

Mom gave him a weird look, but Izuku just laughed, "Am I going to get to see your infamous sleeping bag?"

Eraser glared at him, "If you do anything to it, I swear to god…"

"I would never!" Izuku held up his hands in mock surrender. "Filling it with marbles however…"

Mom laughed, "You're the mysterious friend that Izuku called a grumpy old uncle, aren't you?"

"Mom!" Izuku hissed. "Don't…"

"Oh yeah, that reminds me." Eraser got a terrifying grin on his face. "Nice hoodie."

Nevermind, Izuku still wanted to die.

Chapter End Notes

More Memes!
X X X

Reunion

Chapter Summary

Izuku deals with his arrest.

Chapter Notes

Art!
MantisHead
Enigma
Eden
SoulsOfTheDead X X X
calboi.creates X
g0r3h0und
joshonboard X
Regular ĊøƒƒəęĻ
✧Hi, My name is Arson!✧

Memes!
X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Katsuki didn't want to admit it, but he was worried about the nerd. He'd wanted to stay at the police station, but after Tsukauchi had called his parents, he hadn't been able to figure out any way to explain *why* he was so insistent on staying without letting it slip that it wasn't just some random vigilante who had gone missing. But if he told his old hag that it was *Izuku* then they'd tell Auntie Inko and it would all be a whole thing.

Thankfully dunceface had shot him a text after he'd woken up from his whole brain frying thing saying that they had a list of locations and that Kurogiri was warping All Might all over town to check them out. It had been about the longest hour of Katsuki's life until Kaminari texted again to say that Eraserhead had been found, but Izuku had run away. Again.

The nerd wouldn't' run too far though. Katsuki knew how much Izuku cared about his mom, he wouldn't leave her or sdo anything stupid like that. Katsuki couldn't even count the times the nerd had almost died and just gone home without thinking anything of it, so he knew this time wouldn't be any different, even if he couldn't call Auntie

again without freaking her out. Izuku was almost definitely just at home, sleeping off whatever had happened and he'd just have to get the details later when the nerd woke up. That didn't stop the anxiety from playing in the background as he picked at his lunch, but that wasn't going to go away until he *knew* that Izuku was safe. Now if only he could get his old hag off his back...

Katsuki was acting really weird. On the one hand, Mitsuki knew that his moping around the house was somewhat justified: his teacher had gone missing and his internship had been put on hold, but on the other it just seemed like there had to be something she was missing. Katsuki didn't normally worry about other people too much, but she'd practically had to drag him out of the police station insisting that he'd done all he could and that he needed to leave it to the pros and get some sleep. She was pretty sure he hadn't actually *slept,* but at least she'd tried.

She still didn't understand why he was so upset though, because he wasn't even really that worried about Aizawa. From what little she understood of the situation, Katsuki was way more worried about the vigliante that had gone missing alongside him, which didn't make any sense, especially since when she'd asked why he was so invested, katsuki had just given up and agreed to go home rather than tell her *why,* so she knew he was keeping something from her.

A part of her wanted to cuff him over the head and yell at him until he told her the truth, but she'd raised her son long enough that she knew he had a stubborn streak a mile wide, so that wouldn't do any good. Plus...well, her son was a strong boy and he knew what he was doing. If she pushed too hard, she risked him blocking her out, but annoying as practicing patience was, there was a high chance that Katsuki would come to her when he was ready. If not, *then* she could try yelling.

Her phone rang and glanced at Katsuki, who didn't even look up from his food as she answered, "Yeah, this is Mitsuki."

"Hi, Mitsuki!" Inko's voice sounded cheerful on the other end, but something about it also made alarm bells go off in Mitsuki's brain. "Could you maybe let Katsuki know that the next time my son gets kidnapped by a villain, I would appreciate being informed?"

Mitsuki whipped around as everything finally fell into place, "Katsuki Bakugo!"

So much for not yelling.

The tracking anket felt weird.

Izuku had expected it to be heavier, but really, it was just *there* and that was enough to have him pulling up his pant leg every few seconds. He...he was going to be a hero. Sure, the hero commission was only allowing him to become a hero because of a loophole, but that's the only reason he'd become a vigilante anyway, so it kinda seemed fitting. He still couldn't believe it, but Eraser said that his meeting with Hound Dog tomorrow would help with that , at least a little. He was just kinda ignoring the whole *being a hero* thing and trying to focus more on the *joining class 1A* thing. He'd be able to spend more time with Kacchan and Denki, plus their classmates had so many interesting quirks and Izuku was actually really looking forward to analyzing them and helping everyone improve.

Assuming that anyone was actually willing to take advice from a quirkless kid.

Mom and Eraserhead were going over some paperwork with Detective Tsukauchi, but Izuku couldnt' leave without setting off the alarms on the tracker, so he was just hanging around in the hall and trying not to draw attention to himself. He'd seen a lot of heroes, including some like an old man in a yellow cape that he didn't even recognize, and multiple police officers running around the station in the wake of All for Ones'...well, they were probably busy cleaning up his mess, so he didn't want to get in their way.

"Iz...Vir…" Denki's voice made him look up and Izuku had to hold back laughter at the adorably frustrated look on his boyfrinds' face as he whispered, "Uh...what am I supposed to call you right now? And why are you in the police station?!"

Izuku smiled apologetically and lifted up his pant leg to show Denki is anket, "Um, my secret identity is gone now, so I guess either name is fine? I kinda got arrested."

"Oof…" Denki grimaced. "Uh, congratulations?"

Izuku snorted, "Thanks. I mean, Eraser's been trying to get me to join the hero course for months now, so at least we'll be in the same class."

Denki's face brightened, "Really?! Oh this is gonna be so fun! I can't wait to introduce you to everyone and Mina is gonna literally die, uh,

well, probably not literally, I'm sorry, that is such poor taste. I mean, with what you just had to do and everything…I am so sorry, I'll shut up now."

Denki looked horrified and Izuku swallowed a bit of bile, "Uh, so, um, they told you what happened?"

"Yeah." Denki nodded. "I didn't, like, see the body or anything, besides like the bag they brought in, but All Might and Gran Torino had to go back to the morgue and identify him and everything. Apparently, killing him was supposed to be my job as the next holder of One for All, if you can believe that, so I, uh, guess I should thank you?"

"Oh." Izuku said blankly. "um…you're welcome?"

Denki just shrugged, "So…how are you holding up? You just got arrested, and you told me I could use either name, so I'm assuming the heroes know your identity and…and other stuff."

Izuku took a deep breath, "You mean that I'm quirkless? Yeah, everyone knows now."

"Cool." Denki looked slightly lost. "But they're still letting you join the rehabilitation program, right?"

"Kinda?" Izuku frowned, "I don't really qualify, but Eraser cornered the Hero Commission into making that announcement so that they couldn't take it back after learning that I was quirkless. I think I'm more just a delinquent student of UA more than anything."

Denki grinned, "Hey, if being a delinquent student gets you a hero license, then that works. You gotta do whatever it takes to win, right?"

Izuku blinked a few times, then smiled slowly, "I hadn't thought of it like that. You're pretty smart Denki."

Denki bumped him with his shoulder, "What can I say? I had a great teacher."

Izuku squirmed under Gran Torino's stare, unsure why this felt worse than meeting Denki's actual parents. Gran Torino, who was apparently that hero he hadn't recognized earlier, just looked down his nose at him, a feat in and of itself considering how short he was, and Izuku

couldn't even reach his expression! This was terrifying!

After a long minute, Gran Torino finally spoke, "So you're the kid who took down All for One."

It wasn't a question, but Izuku nodded anyway. Gran Torino didn't say anything else, so Izuku just bit his lip and looked around. All Might was sitting in the corner and Izuku really didn't *want* to talk to him, but this whole thing was so awkward already that he couldn't possibly make it worse, "Sorry for stalking you."

All Might spat up a lungful of blood and Izuku grimaced. He should really get that looked at. All Might wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and stood up a little straighter, "It was somewhat stalking, but you were simply trying to look out for your friend, and you pointed out risks that I myself was unaware of, so no hard feelings."

Izuku hesitated, "Do you remember me?"

Gran Torino raised an eyebrow, "You cornered the number one hero on his roof and you're seriously asking if he remembers you? Kid, you overestimate how forgettable you are."

"No. Um...from before." Izuku shrunk in on himself. "I asked you once if I could be a hero."

"Aizawa said you were quirkless…" All Might's face fell, "My boy, I am so sorry…"

Izuku smiled sadly, "I just wanted to make sure you knew it was fine. You weren't the first or the last to tell me it was impossible, so it wasn't a big deal."

He wasn't quite sure how Gran Torino reached that high, but somehow he was hitting All Might over the head before Izuku could even blink, "Did you seriously tell the kid who *killed your nemesis for you* that he couldn't be a hero?! How dumb can you get you blond oaf!"

Izuku's eyes widened and he waved his arm frantically, "No! Stop! Really, it's alright! Don't hurt him!"

Gran Torino glared at All Might, but thankfully stopped hitting him, "You're gonna be a great hero kid, don't let this idiot tell you otherwise."

Izuku blinked a few times and turned to All Might, who shrugged and smiled sheepishly, “Apparently even the symbol of peace is wrong sometimes.”

Izuku sobbed harder than he ever had in his life.

Chapter End Notes

Final Update: August 6, 2021 (MDT

Whatever it Takes

Chapter Summary

Izuku meets 1A.

Chapter Notes

Art!
Eden X X
ThatPersonYouRunFrom
Micheal With a B(ee)
geese have teeth
A True Gentlebee
GuardianSoul
Crab X
MantisHead
MiHwa
Crack3n_
MikanRopp
a smile better suits a hero
Dust Blown in the Wind
CryptidCat
PJ (Ivan)
tekocage
YamiCipher
☆bubblebearselena☆
DND_ARCH_FIEND
A Normal Lizard
itsapalace
pandaakatsuki
Mintii X X
eyydragons
mikanropp

Memes at the End!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Why is that called the hell test?” Izuku asked as he put down the pencil. “Or was that the warm up?”

Nedzu smiled, “Oh, this is going to be the most fun I’ve had in years!”

Izuku looked around the office, “Um, was there any other paperwork we needed to do, or…?”

“Nope!” Nedzu chirped. “You are officially a student of UA high school and all that’s left is to give you your uniform!”

Izuku blinked, “Oh. I...I didn’t realize I got a uniform.”

Nedzu smiled a little wider, “Of course you get a uniform, Viridian! You *are* a hero student, after all! And don’t worry, our support department is already working on an updated version of your vigilante gear so that you’re not fighting villains with just a hoodie and some things anyone could pick up at a hardware store. Also, our marketing department is going crazy with glee designing a suitable merchandise line. In fact, they already have preorders! You are quite a memorable hero, young Midoriya.”

Izuku blushed, “Uh, thanks? I don’t really think…”

“So!” Nedzu didn’t let him finish his self-deprecating thought. “The plan was to have you arrive near the end of homeroom so that Aizawa could introduce you, but you finished my test faster than even *I* expected, which is excellent and leaves you a bit of time to explore if you so choose.”

“Um..ok?” Izuku gestured to his ankle monitor. “This won’t start freaking out, will it?”

“Oh you’ll be fine.” Nedzu waved his hand dismissively. “Now go get dressed, I want to show you the tunnels.”

Izuku had been mildly concerned about getting dust on his brand new uniform, but Nedzu apparently kept the tunnels fairly clean. Plus, even if he did get some dust on it, it couldn’t possibly look worse than whatever he’d done to his tie, so he wasn’t too worried. So far, he’d found his way to the cafeteria, then a huge concrete training room that probably had something to do with Cementoss’s quirk, and finally what he assumed was class 1B, since he recognized some of the students from what little he'd actually watched of the sports festival, but Eraserhead wasn’t the one teaching. From the map he’d hacked into before Eraserhead had realized what he was doing and confiscated his laptop, both hero classes were near each other, so he should be getting close.

Izuku just kept wandering, occasionally looking through the vent-

shaped openings that let him see out into the rest of the school until he heard Eraser's voice. It didn't take long after that to find the right classroom and peek inside to see Denki spacing out during whatever Eraser was trying to teach. Izuku giggled silently to himself and worked on finding the best way to get into the classroom. Sure, he could probably just exit out into the hall and enter through the door, but that would add an unnecessary step and besides, where was the fun in that? Plus, this way, he could figure out where his classmates were in terms of observational skills and situational awareness, so that he would know where they needed help! If they let him help them, that is.

There was a place near the back of the class where one of the squares of the drop ceiling was able to be removed and Izuku silently pulled it to the side and dropped onto a short bookshelf in the back of the room. Eraserhead sent him a tired glare, but Izuku just grinned, so he rolled his eyes and continued with his lecture without missing a beat. Shinso saw the look on Eraser's face and followed his eyes to the back of the class, doing a double take when he saw Izuku, but he and two students who both seemed to have quirks that affected their hearing were the only ones who had seen him drop in. Izuku smiled mischievously and held a finger to his mouth. The girl with long earlobes glanced toward Eraser before shrugging, probably figuring that if their teacher wasn't doing anything about the intruder, she didn't have to worry about him either. It only took Shinso and the other guy a minute to come to the same conclusion and Izuku almost laughed as he turned to return the ceiling tile to its proper place, but laughing would have given him away, so he stayed silent and just sat cross legged on top of the bookshelf and waited for the other students to realize he was there.

He couldn't help smiling when he saw the expression on Kaachan's face as he glared at Eraserhead. It was like he knew *something* was up, but couldn't quite put his finger on what it was yet. Denki was still obviously staring out the window, which Izuku thought was more cute than anything else, but he was still going to have to give him a hard time about it later.

Izuku looked around at the other students and froze when he saw Shouto Todoroki staring right at him with an unreadable expression on his face. Izuku gulped. Did Todoroki know that he was kinda not really responsible for his dad's death? Sure, when they'd met yesterday Hound Dog had said they were going to work on Izuku's guilt surrounding all the people he'd allowed to die on his watch, but even if it wasn't his fault he still had a hand in it. Though, considering

what had come out during the investigation about Endeavor's abusive nature, maybe Todoroki wouldn't care that much. He'd probably care a little bit more about his brother having to take the fall for Izuku's interference during the sports festival. It hadn't been Izuku's decision to label Dabi as the main vigilante of the incident, but he really hoped that Dabi was at least somewhat ok with being a hero. He'd have to apologize for that at some point.

He gave Todoroki an awkward smile and an even more awkward wave, but for a long moment, there wasn't any reaction, which made Izuku half-wonder if he was actually going to die today. Eventually though, Todoroki broke the world's most awkward staring contest and turned back to the front, making Izuku breathe a sigh of relief...which of course was when Kacchan finally whirled around in his seat and glared straight at him.

Apparently, when Auntie Mitsuki had told him that Izuku had been arrested, Kacchan's only response had been *about damn time,* so that was a thing. A big part of him that was still stuck in middle school had been terrified that Kacchan would destroy him as soon as he'd learned that Izuku had been accepted to UA, but maybe it was a testament to how much things had changed that he'd just huffed and challenged him to a spar. It was exactly what Izuku had always dreamed of when he was a little kid and he still couldn't quite wrap his head around the fact that Kacchan was treating him as an equal, but he couldn't quite help hoping that he'd have time to get used to it. And who knew, maybe someday he'd actually be able to accept Kacchan's apology for everything that had happened when they were younger. Kacchan's glare slowly morphed into a smirk and izuku couldn't help hesitantly smiling back as Kacchan turned back to the front.

Izuku looked around the room again and frowned. He'd been here for a few minutes already, enough to do some serious damage or get a significant amount of information if he'd been an enemy instead of a new student, but still only a handful of his new classmates had noticed him. They would have to work on that, otherwise they would be in for a rude awakening when they actually went out into the world of heroism and started fighting real villains all the time.

Eraser seemed to think the same thing, because as soon as he finished his lecture, he sighed deeply, "Shinso, Jiro, Todoroki, Shouji, and Bakugo. You all get extra credit."

Izuku focused hard on not giving himself away as the rest of the class exploded into protests. Denki had practically fallen out of his seat at

the announcement and one of the students, a girl with pink hair and skin, had jumped to her feet and started yelling, “That’s not fair! We’ve all just been sitting here listening, so why do they get extra credit and not the rest of us?!”

“Because if I were a villain, the rest of you would be dead.” Izuku spole up from the back of the room, making everyone who hadn’t seen him yet whirl around in their seats. “You really need to work on situational awareness with your students, Eraser.”

Izuku sat back as the class exploded and couldn’t help giggling when he realized Eraser was hiding a smile behind his capture scarf. Apparently his students had needed this lesson. Well, Izuku was always happy to help. Kacchan was laughing his head off and Denki was smiling so widely his cheeks must be hurting by now, but most of the rest of the class was, to put it mildly, losing their minds. No one had tried to attack him yet, though, which Izuku was both grateful for and disappointed at, because they really *should* be trying to do more than yell, considering that as far as they knew, Izuku was an intruder. So they had some work to do, but Izuku was more than used to helping heroes.

Eraser let the chaos go on for about 30 seconds or so before rolling his eyes and activating his quirk. Within seconds, the entire class was dead silent and Izuku instinctively reached for his notebook, “Can you feel it when your quirk is erased? What does it feel like? Is it physical or more mental? Do you still feel your quirk or is it totally gone? What about...”

“Slow down, nerd!” Kacchan yelled. “If you want answers you gotta wait for us to hear one question before you move onto the next five, you idiot!”

Izuku chuckled awkwardly and rubbed the back of his neck, “Sorry, Kacchan.”

“It’s a sense of emptiness.” All heads turned toward Tsu as she answered. “It’s weird.”

“Yeah.” Denki grimaced. “Kinda like nails on a chalkboard.”

“Why are you asking?” Iida asked suspiciously. “Are you somehow immune to Aizawa’s…”

Aizawa cleared his throat loudly to call the class’s attention back to him, “Are you here to learn or are you here to gossip? Because if

you're just here to waste time, I can arrange for you to have *a lot* more time on your hands. Are you done? Good."

Izuku sat at attention alongside the rest of the class as Eraser glared at them for a moment, then nodded, "Class, this is your new classmate, Izuku Midoriya."

Immediately, a dignified girl with a ponytail shot her hand up, "Excuse me for asking sir, but how? Shinso had to prove himself by doing well in the sports festival to even have a chance at getting in and was only offered the spot because Hagakure dropped out."

"Yeah!" A guy with black hair and large elbows spoke up. "It just doesn't seem fair! We've never even seen this guy before!"

"And yet, he managed to sneak into our classroom and none of you noticed." Shinso smirked and leaned back. "Plus, from what I heard, he was pretty busy during the sports festival, so I think he gets a pass."

Denki snorted and Izuku shot him a panicked glare that only lasted half a second, before turning to the rest of the class, "Well, I, uh, don't really deserve to be here, but, um, I'll try my best!"

"Shut up, Izuku." Kacchan rolled his eyes. "If Eraser had had his way, you would have been here from day one. Plus you've fought more villains than all of us combined, so don't even start on your *I don't deserve to be a hero* bull."

"Kacchan! I…" Izuku turned to glare at Denki, who was turning red from how hard he was trying to hold back his laughter, "Denks! Stop laughing!"

Denki just shrugged, "Sorry Izuku, but he's kinda right. You definitely deserve to be here. And, like, Sero's totally wrong when he says nobody knows who you are. Everybody here has seen you. Well, videos of you, but same difference."

Izuku shrunk in on himself slightly as he watched the rest of the class exchange confused glances. Was it too late to run away? The tracking anklet would be tricky to work around, but if he disappeared into the tunnels he could probably hide from everyone except for Nedzu for long enough to disable it somehow. Did Nedzu like him enough to let that happen?

Izuku was pulled from his panic by Eraserhead addressing the class,

“Kaminari is correct. While you may have never *met* Midoriya, you *have* heard of him. Class, meet Viridian, the newest entrant in the vigilante rehabilitation program.”

If Izuku had thought the class’s reaction was explosive before, it was nothing compared to their reaction at learning he was a well-known vigilante. It shouldn’t have surprised him so much, but Izuku still found himself reaching for his weapons like he was preparing for an attack only to realize they weren’t there. He could have told himself that he was safe here, that this was school, not a villain fight and that his classmates weren’t going to attack him at the slightest provocation, but that would be illogical. Izuku had been to school before, he knew being attacked, even in front of a teacher, was still 100% on the table. He shrunk in on himself a little bit. Was UA actually going to be any different?

Eraserhead seemed to sense his panic and activated his quirk again, “Viridian has already proven that he is very capable at taking down villains and doing other work normally associated with heroism, but he has yet to prove that he can do so legally. I trust the rest of you to be good examples for him and listen to his advice. Remember: he has more experience than you, so use that resource wisely.”

Eraserhead blinked and Iida raised his hand, “Sir, does him being a vigilante have something to do with the fact that he is apparently immune to your quirk?”

Izuku froze. He really shouldn’t have gotten so caught up in analyzing Eraser’s quirk, but he’d seen Denki and Kacchan and Eraserhead and they all knew and Tsu knew too and she still thought he was cool and he guessed that a part of his brain had just forgotten that other people were around who *didn’t* know yet and why had he let that slip?! Denki caught his eye from across the room and he gave Izuku a sympathetic look, silently offering to say it so that Izuku wouldn’t have to do it himself. Izuku only hesitated a second before sending him a jerky, grateful nod.

Denki nodded and grinned as he addressed the class, “Nah, that doesn’t have anything to do with being a vigilante, he’s just quirkless so he doesn’t have anything to miss. Makes it even more badass when I go full out in a spar and he still puts me on my back every time.”

Izuku half expected the class to explode again, but they didn’t. Instead they went dead silent and every single person stared at Izuku like they were expecting him to contradict what Kaminari had said. Out of the

corner of his eye, Izuku noticed Kacchan tensing like he was getting ready for a fight and if he didn't know any better, he would have sworn that Eraser was doing the same, but that couldn't be right, so Izuku ignored it. A couple people seemed angry or disbelieving, but mostly everyone just looked confused and a little shocked, which was probably an understandable reaction.

That was, until a short kid with purple hair spoke up, "Why would they let a quirkless freak in here?"

"Oi!" Kacchan growled. "He doens't need a fucking quirk to whoop your ass!"

"Mineta." Eraserhead cut in firmly. "Detention. And a five page essay on quirk discrimination."

"What?!" Mineta screamed and started sobbing. "But…!"

Eraserhead glared at him harder, "Do you want me to make it ten?"

Mineta shook his head frantically and Eraser huffed, "Good. you're learning. Lesson number one about being a hero: never underestimate your opponent. Every villain who has made that mistake with Viridian has regretted it."

Izuku stared at the floor as Eraser let that pronouncement sink in, but all he really saw was All for One. Sure, there had been other villains that had underestimated him, but All for One was the only one that had ever realized Izuku was quirkless. He hadn't lived to actually regret it though.

After a long moment Shinso groaned, "That is ridiculously unfair. How do you know quirks so well if you don't even have one? You probably know my quirk better than I do and you've only met me once!"

Izuku blushed, "Well, uh, I always thought quirks were really interesting and the science behind them is pretty cool, so I've been analyzing them for a while and it's really useful for investigations and things like that."

"I bet an outside perspective helps you see things others can't." Tsu croaked. "You don't have anything to compare it to, so you automatically keep an open mind. That's pretty cool Midoirya."

Izuku blinked a few times, then found himself actually smiling, "Thanks! I...thank you."

“Yeah!” Denki let a handful of lightning play across his fingers. “Izuku knows, like, everything about quirks. I’d still be frying my brain on the daily if it wasn’t for him!”

Kacchan gave him a teasing look, “Is that why you asked him out?”

Denki turned a brighter shade of red than Izuku had thought possible and pretty much immediately, the pink girl slammed her hands on her desk, “Your mystery boo is a *vigilante?!* Kaminari! You need to tell us these things!!!”

Izuku giggled as Denki stammered through an apology, then he glanced around the room until he accidently made eye contact with Eraser, who raised one eyebrow and silently mouthed, *are you alright, problem child?*

In spite of himself, Izuku nodded. Sure, he still had depression and problems with being confident with himself, but he also had people in his corner. He’d practiced running away from his problems for so long now and he’d gotten pretty good at it, but maybe it was time to start fighting them head on like a true hero. And if there was one thing he’d learned since his first night as a vigilante, it was that he would do whatever it took to save people.

But this time, he was including himself.

Chapter End Notes

Memes!
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Thank you all so much for coming with me on this journey. I wanted to make a fun vigilante fic that also gave a realistic depiction of depression and I am so happy that I was able to achieve that. The amount of love, fanart, memes, and even cosplays that I have received have astounded me. I am so happy this fic has gotten so many people through a pandemic and even though I don't plan to make a sequel, I hope to keep creating stories that all of you will enjoy!
I hope you all enjoy the next storm.
Sincerely,
Clouds

End Notes

This fic has a Tv Tropes page and a Discord.
If you want to yell at me, please leave a comment or find me on tiktok or tumblr.

Anyone can create any fanart, fanfiction or tranlslation based on this work as long as they give me a link so I can enjoy it too!

Works inspired by this one

Wishing Wells (Red Hood Vigilante Izuku) by UndeadSoldierShady, [Podfic] Viridian: The Green Guide by RuneLore, A Nail in a World of Rust by PsuedoVillainz, The Analyst by aicyel, (UP FOR ADOPTION) And Then There Were... Five? by fantasyangelo, Karlos: The Ponchoed Guide by Anonymous, Viridian: Chipped Marbles by AokiH, Buzzed Alight by izeishere, Izuku's Multiverse (HEAVY EDITING) by Tequilakeela, Viridian's Chaos by shallow_yet_deep, Y'know what? Fuck You by HattedPenguin420, Midoriya, Midoriya, Midoriya, Midoriya... How Many Midoriyas Are There????? by Jdot_FightMe, Reading/ Viridain: The Green Guide by Rowan2337, Viridian: AfO Bane by SethTalon, Viridian: Nighttime Walks by Annathori, Salamander Cares by TomorrowsHero, Did He Just Hit Bakugou With a Soup Can...? by Not_The_State, The Interdimensional Meet-and-Greet by Jdot_FightMe, "For The Want Of A Nail" things can change by HeadcaseKiller, Someone Help Aizawa Before He Kills A Man by Jdot_FightMe, Uh, Midoriya? Why Are You Stalking Me? by Jdot_FightMe, All for the want of a horseshoe nail by Fandom_Compass, New Vigilante in Town? by Satancannotstopme803, What about Eri? by AceOfKardz, SlothAnon, Counting Stars by Anaffeine, We're the Same, You and I by Smiley5494, This little piggy has red shoes, isn't that weird? by TicciJack, This Little Piggy Found Its Way Home by CertifiedInsomniac, Green and Black; Mural and Vigilante by Smiley5494, To Be Human by

HattedPenguin420, I’m a hero?! by Margarite_Of_Mere, This little piggy... by Genderless_rat, FTWOAN, Beyond the fourth wall! by Diana_Soot, Fandom_Compass, Justdumb05, Not_The_State, Excuse me, Im a WHAT?! by Margarite_Of_Mere, Questions by PuellaPulchra, screw the appendix, all my homies hate the appendix by Your_Neighborhood_Disaster, Viridian: Path to Heroics by mangawriter77, When Paths Intersect (And Break) by FieldsOfSouls, Voidful_Abyss, Eraserhead's Number One Fan by 7Lights13Darknesses, Viridian: From Vigilante to Hero by Dark_Harbinger_of_the_Abyss, UA Teachers Babysit Alternate Selves of the School's Problem Child by HihiImMimi, and then there were five by orphan_account, A Vigilante's Guide to Parenting by mangawriter77, Reacting to the FTWOAN Series by CrazyHope13, Lovestruck by FieldsOfSouls, it's taking too long by sheeponthehillside, They Are Not The Same (Not Fully At The Very Least) by PancakeFlowers, Five Problem Children? by 1zu_00 (orphan_account), What's the Problem with Being Lovestruck? by An_Ace_Reading_To_Escape_The_World, Before I Go by ThisRealityAside_73, Every Minute and Every Hour (I Miss You More) by AlphabetGhost, croissants with a side of attempted murder by sheeponthehillside

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